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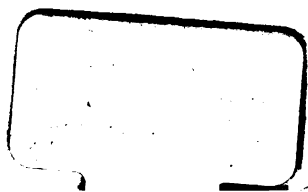
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Portug ()



Recreations

NBI





RECREATIONS

RECREATIONS

By J. T.

*"Verse-making was least of my virtues: I viewed with
despair
Wealth that never yet was but might be—all that verse
making were
If the life would but lengthen to wish, let the mind
be laid bare.
So I said 'To do little is bad, to do nothing is
worse'—*

And made verse."
(BROWNING: *Ferishtah's Fancies.*)

*"But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his
separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of
Things as They Are!"*
(KIPLING: *The Seven Seas; L'Envoi.*)



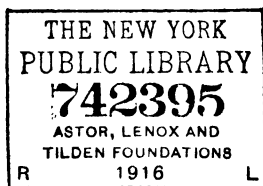
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DEDICATION

*Youth or maiden under the blossoming trees,
What may the breath of my far-off song waft
you?*

*Rather the drowsy hum of the golden bees
Is young and true.*

*Man or woman under the laden boughs,
Shall my dead words make live the thing you do?
Rather the summer's voice or your own vows
May comfort you.*

*You happiest ones under the glowing leaves,
Is mine a flame-tipt song to pierce you through?
Who knows but your children hear what echo
grieves
The hope in you?*

*Agéd and Lonely under the naked limbs,
Can my last breath bring in the spring anew?
Nay, for the winter's mournful breathing dims
The life on you.*

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RECREATIONS

A SONG OF HELL

Past the Cities of the Living,
Thro' the Ashes of the Dead,
O'er the Plains of Retribution
In my dying dream I fled,
Thro' the Land of Eyeless Weeping,
Where the raging tears are fire
And the worm drives out all sleeping
With his torment of Desire.

In the sombre Antechamber
Of the Royal Presence Room,
I have hailed my haggard brothers
As they shrink before their doom;
And we hear a maiden singing
With a voice to buy her shame,—
But the houri's arms are flinging
Far her gossameres of flame.

For the King is filled with sorrow,
And he bids his harem dance,
While he sinks in dreamy languor
'Neath the anguish of their glance,
As their feet are gaily tripping
Through a maze of utter woe,
And the streaming flames are stripping
From their bodies, bare as snow;

As they dazzle him with whiteness,
Throwing high their tortured arms,
Singing with transmuted madness,
Luring him with hellish charms,
Writhing in delirious revel,

Bathed in life, forever drenched
With the never-ending torments
Of Desire that's never quenched.

Who will soothe the King in sadness,
Who will share his bridal bed,
Who will drain the bitter gladness
Steeped in love forever dead?
Look, his eyes are slowly turning
To a woman's flowing hair,
Pale the lambent tongues are burning
Round her face so strangely fair.

Now his face is grim with passion,—
Like a death his limbs are set,
Fast his soul is ebbing from him—
What will such a love beget?
Sweeter swells the anguished wailing
As the semblance of the King
Into glowing mists is paling
Hanging in an amber ring:

Hanging in a ring of amber
Flames with flickering hearts of red,
Pulsing with the lust of ages
Round his bride's abhorrent head;
Bright the cloud is settling slowly
Drenching her in shrouds of light,
She is given to him wholly—
Love is born in Hell tonight.

Oh the melody of Chaos
Shouting loud with thund'rous voice,
Like the barren winds cavernous,
When the King has made his choice;

Incantations, howlings, groanings,
Cursing at an outcast fate,
Shrieks of spirits, sobbings, moanings,
Wails of love, and prayers of hate.

Throbbing, writhing, panting, melting,
Mingled in unhallowed bliss,
Hear the ecstasy that's singing
In the Serpent's stinging hiss,—
For the King is madly twining
Like an emerald of fire
And his jewelled coil is shining
In the furnace of desire.

But the Bride is wan with loathing
And she holds her face aside,
Feebly thrusting his head backward
As he tries to kiss his bride;
See, the coils are crushing closely
Round her lily breasts of white,
And her arms are struggling vainly—
She must lie with him to-night.

To a bridal couch of embers
He will drag her shrinking form,
To that chamber stark with terrors,
Where the outraged spirits swarm—
Mock him with his lusts forgotten,
Call him by his hidden name,
Holding up the ghouls begotten
In that bed of nameless shame.

As her virgin breath is fleeting
From the tangles of her mate,
Back she casts a look entreating—

Blind with horror at her fate,
Looking as the bird ensnared
She had freed with her own hands,
When she walked a care-free maiden,
Ere she heard the King's commands.

Oh the wildness of that seeking,
In the hell of her despair,
Oh the torn, dishonored beauty,
And her eyes that wildly stare;
And the hopeless, pleading terror,
Streaming with dishevelled hair,
Meets my soul as in a mirror—
Binds my soul and holds it there.

And I see my lost Oenone
In a second's fleeting glance,
As my heart is stilled with Beauty,
In a muffled, beating trance,
Dim the Devil's Court is paling
To a blessed sea-girt land,
Where we walked at twilight failing,
Softly singing, hand in hand.

As the parched plains of Sorrow
Brood in purple mists away,
I must live again the morrow
Of that direful, bitter day,
When the King had sought her body
In the daylight growing dim,
When he lusted for her fairness
And she gave herself to him.

Oh the racking of the sobbing
When she laid her lost soul bare,

Oh the agony of weeping
When she told me of the snare
I can hear a dead sea's silence
Round a waste of dismal shore—
Silence of unuttered horror—
She is His forevermore.

I can feel forgotten moonlight
Stealing over sea and hill,
I can hear her voiceless pleading
Dumb with grief that will not kill,
As she chants in maddened raving
Of a soul that's fled before
Her where is no shade of saving
From the King forevermore.

On my bosom gently rocking
That dear head of His disgrace,
Arms around her neck I'm locking
In one dying, last embrace—
But her spirit shrinking, fleeting,
Fleeting, and already flown,
Greets me with a mystic greeting,
Greets me with a Word unknown.

And the Word is past all knowing—
Past all dreams of mortal ken,
But I know that Word remembered
Would bring back her soul again;
Hark—the Voice is growing clearer,
Vanished all the tortured years,
See—her spirit hovers nearer
And my hair is wet with tears.

Ah, the dews of night are falling,
Weeping as they wept of yore,
And her pleading voice is calling—
Calling once, to call no more—
She is speaking—she is speaking—
God—at last the Word she spoke—
Hovering near me—will it reach me?
Oh too late!—The Vision broke.

She is seeking, she is searching
As she pants in her despair
In an agony of hoping,
And her soul goes mad with prayer:
But the Word is lost forever
And all memory is cloud
In the splendor of Hell's passion
And the Devil's bridal shroud.

She has fallen, he is dragging
Her to chill the Seventh Hell,
And I shout in exultation—
I am mad—I loved her well—
Loved her as my soul forgotten
In the loveless deaths I've died,
Loved her in my age-long seeking—
Loved her as the Devil's bride.

Swing ye fiends the crimson censers,
Dash their fire into my eyes,
Mock with memory remembered,
Rock my spirit as it lies
On the solemn billows fretful
With their sullen, stately swell,
Till I sink in pain forgetful
Of a hell within a hell.

Let me dash on thro' the Ages
 Battling rocks and flames and trees,
Let me suffer all the torments
 Of thy loathsome disease,
Cursed with life forever springing
 From the charnel of the world,
Blind with memory of seeing
 Her in outer darkness hurled.

O Thou God in Heaven creating
 Agonies of Love and Death,
Breathing loving, breathing hating
 In thy life-inspiring breath,
Look on thy forgotten plaything—
 Look, thou Devil-God and see
This thy master-piece of jesting—
 Laugh for all eternity!

MAIDENS

Where shall I find you, maiden mine
Who never yet shone for me,—
Under the sun of the sea's gold shine—
There in the dream-dusk sea?

O radiant maid who never shone
On beach or sea or foam,
Only lead me, love my own
To Dawn's deep crystal home.

There at last I'll clasp again
One hand ne'er touched by hands;
I'll sing the Morning's calm refrain
No maiden understands.

HAUNTED

'Tis the island wood where you shadowy stood
On a morn—but long ago,
Like a startled fawn awakened at dawn
When the dying night moans low;
And now you seem but a beautiful dream,
To lure me with yearning eyes,
Till the ghostly breeze in these haunted trees
Dies in remembered sighs.

Ah, many a year have I sought you here
And my sea-mates forget to sigh
In every zone for you alone,
So I—come here to die;
No hope was theirs and long despairs
Billowed their briny years,
But I read in your eyes that hope never dies
Tho' a sea may drown in tears.

Was I other than these?—for the kindly breeze
Whispered—"She whispers to you"—
And the morning stir of the restless fir
Mourned—"I am grieving for you,"
Till the sundring sound of the tide swept round
In echoes of sobbing years,
To rise like the swell of a far-off bell
And answered—"Have done with fears."

Oh, the charm and grace of your vanished face
Were the lure and the life of a soul,
And the surging strife of a haunted life
Was the dream in the restless roll
Of the sea as it read from the scroll of the dead,

And in storm this word again—
"She bids you speak, tho' your soul be weak
Lost love is never in vain."

Where the mad ships reel on storm-bared keel
O'er the ghost of a dream-locked sea,
The lost winds shriek their whistling "Speak!—
Speak, ah speak to me!"
But the wild refrain of the winds in pain
Is the sea with a sorrowing plea,
For its restless roll is your yearning soul
Slumbering down in the sea.

With every breath we prayed for death
From cities and seas and kings,
But ever your eyes, where the hope never dies,
Have urged me to better things;
I am weary now, and your pale, wan brow
Seems weary of thought as mine,
Oh ease my brain from its maddening pain—
Madder than maddest wine.

Are you only a dream in the fleeting gleam
Of a morn that never was real;
Are your yearning eyes, where the love never dies,
Still mute in their sweet appeal?
Is your shadowy isle but a mist to beguile
The weary ships that seek
To find you again—and wearier men—
Speak, for I cannot speak.

THE POET

Cold, cold is the dew upon his hair,
Far, far the stars above his careless head,
And silence everywhere
Hushes, hushes all he would have said:
He is not dead!
Lo!—There he wanders, touching first a star,
Then a lily's dewy cheek;—
Hear a marvell!—Sundered aeons afar
The petals' frailty from yon raging Sun
He made them one
(This thing all lilies know,)
So long ago;—could she but speak
Then would she tell us so:
How long ago! yet this has ever been,
Before his hour it was; it is;
And still the word that crowned her queen
Of stars and flowers was only his;
Had he not sung
The magic of the mind had never wed
This child of heaven and distant hell,—
Man's dusty tongue
Denying Night her unseen diadem
Had said, "Be ye apart, and twain
O Star and starrier flower."
Only he has married them
Forever, his the mystic spell
Above their airy bed;
Their bridal chamber is the mind
Of aeons, his the little hour
Outlasting ruined Time. It was not vain—
Though he be dead—
The lightning thought that struck all ages blind
A vivid instant,—he

Is writ forever on the brow of things
For years and men to see;
And, though no more he sings
Or fires a sodden clay, he is,
That flash is he;
Nor shall he perish utterly
Or ever, till all Time is his
And is no more; till Death o'erwhelm
Imagination's everlasting realm—
Usurp strong Reason's throne,
And make the end of All his own.

FOUND

Where is the Kingdom of Happiness hidden,
Under what crags do its seven gates glow,
Over what breeze do its banners flow,
Down what ravine or pathway forbidden?

I asked a bride and she answered me,
"Our land of love is the hiding place,
There is all joy's abiding place;
Our valleys are bright for all to see."

"Come," I said, to the bridegroom, "hither;
Are the words of your love the voice of truth?"
"Our meadows are green with the waters of
youth,
And the Kingdom is here where no buds wither."

They saw the banners; I turned to a maid,
"What flowers are those you tenderly cherish?"
"Dreams I have culled lest my longing perish,
But harsh is the way and I grow afraid."

A boy by her side was smitten with wonder,
"A silly girl and her dreams may wilt,"—
And he shook his sword by its jewelled hilt,
"I will capture the Kingdom with all its plunder."

He was lost; so I questioned one grown rich,—
"The Kingdom lies by a golden mountain;
By a Sea whence gushes a silver fountain
I will ease my palm's and my fingers' itch."

No guides were these, and I sought the roses;
"Where, sweet friends, does the Kingdom lie?"
They hung their heads with a fragrant sigh,—
"In our hearts, where the soul of the noon un-
closes."

Baffled, I turned to a gem-eyed toad,—
"You who blink, was the fair truth spoken?"
"No," he croaked, "if my head be broken
You'll see the way,—a jewel-strewn road."

"Philosopher-toad I will none of your jesting,
But I like your cult,"—and I stopped a sage;
"The path," said he, "is a printed page,
And the wars unwon are truth's grim wresting."

He gave me a wonderful book as guide,
Its words were tears, its letters were laughter,
And I read, "Thou shalt find the Kingdom here-
after,"
As I closed the book with Night at my side.

Then I felt the awe of her windy tresses,
"Are the jewels on your hair the Kingdom's
lights?"

"Nay," and her voice was low, "but Night's":
And she touched my brow with a dream's caresses.

Lost at dawn on the mountain-tops
I questioned a spectre, "Speak what place is
This where the shades hide tear-stained faces?"
"Heaven; and our tears are the small dew-drops."

"The Kingdom of Joy?" I asked another
Whose face was wet, and he answered "yea;"
"Let this be truth, I'll not gainsay,
But who was that other?" He said, "my brother."

A lonely ghost went wandering there,
His eyes were dry but his face ungladdened;
"Why, for you, is Paradise saddened?"
"I strove for happiness, earned despair."

"Come," I urged, "let us seek together;
These are the crags, and God's fair town
Is below;" as I turned to lead him down
There fell at my feet an angel's feather.

Proudly we turned our backs on the sky,
Through the day's long heat our souls grew
meeker;

"Harsh," groaned he, "is the way of the seeker;"
"Let us wait for Night," I said, "and die."

"Let us search no more though its gates be seven.
I weary," he wept, "and joy would kill;"
So we laid us down with a ready will
Under the mystical silver of heaven.

"Lo!" he cried, "'tis the seventh gate!"
As he leaped with youth at the sudden wonder,
For the barren crags were rent asunder,
And the Keeper smiled, "You come, though late."

My ghostly friend, his whole face shining
Brighter than morning's, cried, "How strange!
Your weariness glows with a wonderful change;"
And I laughed, "O Soul, 'tis your own designing."

Then we roamed the meadows in calm content,
Where the roses bloomed, their petals unclosing
Over the gold of a noon reposing
Fair as a god with his youth unspent.

I nudged my friend and he shook with glee,
For under a bush lay an old man sleeping,
And a toad on his head sat solemnly keeping
Watch o'er a dewdrop's tiny sea.

But who walked yonder, bashfully smiling?
The hilt in her hand, the flowers in his hair
I knew, and he mourned with a mock-despair,
"Broken, alas, by a maid's beguiling."

We journeyed on through the golden gloaming
Slowly happy to Night's bright land;
And we saw them wandering, hand in hand,
The Bride and Groom to their last long homing.

Then Night looked down from unsoundable eyes,
And my friend glanced backward, his face forgetful,
The sound of his voice far-off, regretful—
"How sad is joy when the last grief dies:

Ah, where alas, is Happiness hidden,
Are the seven gates but the doors of a tomb—
Over each portal the terrible doom:
'To some who enter am I forbidden?'"

OUT OF THE PAST

THEN AND NOW

Fair flower of pagan days,
Who has not sung thy praise
Remembering thee?

Proud bloom on yonder Sea,
Where shines thy Land
Aflower so distantly?

Is that wide welter spanned,
(Could we but understand)
By bridge of dreams?

Afar the white cliff gleams—
Still foam its base,—
Our beach! so near it seems.

Put forth and find that Place
Beyond all time, all space,
Beyond the Sea.

EXILES

Land of the Morning!* memory's realm,
Magical vale no care may take
Or Grief's gray hordes o'erwhelm—
We are thy children still:
Though we wander far from the breezy brake
Under the glow of thy golden hill—

*(Note: Ur of the Chaldeans; sometimes (in the cuneiform writings,) The Garden of Eden.)

(Alas that we left so soon, so soon)
We shall never forget
Our last cool drink from the little rill,
Or the rose we took for thine own dear sake,
And the few white jessamine stars, to set
Only with thy last moon.

There flowed a river slowly down,
Thyme its banks, where velvety bees
Tumbled from cup to crown,
Oh! but so long ago!
There was trumpet-vine on the poplar trees
Seen afar in its scarlet glow
(Oh whisper not that it shines no more!)
Do the bees still haunt the thyme,—
Where are those lizards we used to know
Sunning themselves in lazy ease;
Does our wild clematis boldly climb
Those rocks it loved of yore?

Under my pillow I'll hide a rose,
(No jessamine flower or thyme grows here);
In the first swift sleep e'er eyelids close
Undreaming, I'll see Thee again;
Still is the air and crystal clear,
Far away shines a silver plain—
Land of the Morning! glowing afar
Pure as a jewel on Time's bright brow
Undimmed as ever by life's dull rain,
We have remembered thy happiness, Dear,
And we shall forget thee—hear our vow—
Only with thy last star.

AN IDOL

Prisoned in granite bonds
Huge stone you have waited for me
For a million years of years
That my hand might set you free.

Cursed Idol, inhumanly grim
You have watched the Stars and God;
No more shall you gaze on Him
Or the Stars when I shatter you.

Cold in your frozen sneer,
Dumb as your sullen tongue,
You have heard the wails of men
And every hope they've sung.

God and Stars, cold stone
Shall judge me for what I do;
Not you shall see them alone
When men sink under the earth.

So I shatter your brow to dust
And bury you deep in this cave;
No more shall you see the Stars
Till your dust is mankind's grave.

ADVICE FROM THE GODS

What profits?—Wine in a golden bowl,
Garments of grape-red flame,
Or flesh far sweeter than grapes
Enticing to daintier shame,—
Or love in alluring shapes—
What profits these things, our Soul?

Disgust, our lust-drugged youthful fool;
Passion slinks out when reason goes;
That breast all yours is a marble thing,
That flower in her hair a rotting rose
And drunkard's discords those hymns you sing
To your harlot goddess, most truthful fool.

Passions kiss not your weakling men,
Infinite lust not theirs;
Painless kisses are only ours
Whose body no mortal shares;—
Men, your vices wither as flowers,
Be monks, grow weeds again.

THE IVORY GATE

Over the shimmering endless plain
Stark with its rocks and sand,
Under a sky that weeps no rain
To bless the desert land,
The white-winged birds fly on with pain
In a stricken, hopeless band;
When will they find their Sea again
And sweep thro' the foam on the strand?

Steel is the hills' inscrutable blue
In a hard and changeless guile,
Eternally old, and eternally new
With a smile of fathomless wile;
It is guarding the vale of shadows and dew
As the birds fly on the while,
And they hail the hills—"Does your Pass
lead thro'
To the green of our blessed isle?"

But never an answering word as they wing
The titan passes, bound
For their happy isles, white-blossoming
Beyond the crashing sound
Of curling waves on a coraled ring,
Encircling homelands round,
With waving palms, where others sing—
But these are homeward bound.

Droop the wearily fluttering wings—
Death will come too late,
Down a pass a messenger brings
News of the Ivory Gate—
Set as a bar by the Mountain Kings,
Slaves of remorseless Fate:
Fold the dusty, useless wings,
Brokenly desolate.

Blindly, wearily, one by one,
They beat the tracery rare,
Ivory carved by Fate's blind Son—
Strong, and wonderfully fair,
Till one by one, their journey done,
They yearn in last despair
For all they see—the sky, the sun,
The foam, and heaven's free air.

IN HADES

I Proserpine

Not I may pluck thee, vanished Rose,
Or cull thy dream with chilly hand,
Remembered love forever knows
The Borderland.

What though I haunt the Stygian sand—
I may not pluck thee, vanished Rose;
The Borderland
Is Pluto's realm; afar he throws.

His dreams to cloud with wild repose
The Borderland;
Not I may pluck thee, vanished Rose—
Ah, why, thy love can understand.

The Borderland
Shall pale to His eternal close;
Alas, I hear his dread command
I may not pluck thee, vanished Rose.

II Pluto

Alas, I hold her earthier soul,
Her airy love may still repine;
I reft her from the grassy knoll—
She is not mine.

For her the air is yet divine
I hold, alas, her earthier soul;
She is not mine,
Nor may hell ever make her whole;

My sultry thunders angered, roll—
'She is not mine.'
Alas, I hold her earthier soul—
A crystal cup without the wine.

She is not mine;
Although I take her journey's toll,
Her backward glance is but the sign
I hold, alas, her earthier soul.

PSYCHE

By the shimmering poplars and beeches,
Alilt to the laughing breeze,
Where whispers the wind on the reaches
Of wolds by the well-loved trees,
I caught you, my Psyche, and kissed you,
And then, dear spirit, I missed you—
Frail Psyche, my wayward tease.

But the tears rippled low in your laughter,
As your wings glanced merrily on,
And your dream-eyes shadowed "hereafter"—
Poor butterfly, where have you gone?
Sweet friend of the summers and swallows,
Have you fluttered where no Spring follows—
In the Land of Thither and Yon?

Were you then all mocking and smiling,
Not a heart behind it all?
Was it love, or an hour's beguiling
That bound me your willingest thrall?
Yet you answered my wild entreating,
Dear dream, with your dances fleeting,
But now, I call, and call.

In my dreams I fondle your tresses
And feel your wings on my cheek
With a butterfly's dream of caresses,
Oh Psyche, where shall I seek?—
I rise, and the meadows are dreary,
And the breeze in the beeches grow weary,—
Ah Psyche, the wolds are bleak!

Oh Psyche come back to your lover—
Lost Psyche with the sun-kissed wings,
Come back to the beeches, and hover
O'er hollows where summer sings
All day with the chirping of crickets
And care-free birds of the thickets—
Come back where the blue-bell rings!

IN EGYPT

I. Isis

The jackal prowls thy courts by night, the owl
Flits silent by; thy fountain writhes for breath
With strangling weeds and living things most foul,
And thy High Priest is sacrileged in death—
A chattel in the hands of strawless slaves
To make a vandal show before the mob;
O anguished Outcast, rend these ghouls who rob
Thy ravished shrines and violated graves!

The dreamy lotus lilies lift and fall
Upon the slumbering waters, as when Thou
Wast Goddess—their frail might outlasting thine;
But thro' the whispering reeds I hear Thee call
My Soul—my Goddess then, my Goddess now—
I'll lay a lotus on thy broken shrine.

II. Loti

Weep! thou Nile, for we are loti, fair
Tho' Egypt mourns; O must we ever know
Thy meres and shallow places? Long ago
We wove a million crowns for fragrant hair
Of priestesses, that knew not any care

Save pain of love; and now, we deck thy slow
Unending stream, remorseless in its flow
By tombs and palaces where grim despair
Dreams not of love. O Isis, Horus, lone
In heaven's unending solitude, but hear
Thy purple playthings on the waters moan
What once was prayer,—when we were thy most
 dear
Fond worshippers; ah, do not now disown
Our pleading when the very noon is drear.

III. Memnon

Huge pylons, stark in man-outlasting might,
And grim colossi stalk the sandy plain
Where giant Memnon, brooding still in vain
This ancient wrong of time, awaits the light
That Rā shall send to banish Egypt's night;
He hymns vain monotones of praise again—
A witness to his god's eternal reign,
The sire of Night in Day, and Wrong in Right.

The priest, and suppliants who bow to priest,
Lie down in equal dust; lo, all the throng
That drave the hecatomb of bulls to feast,
Are one with their dead cattle; then, how long
Shall this dead thing of stone still face the East,
And unmolested drone its empty song?

IV. Karnak

Egyptian suns have loomed thy wondrous walls
In shadowed hieroglyph of Kings' decay
Across the waste these thousand years, and they
Have marched with Empire's pomp where night ap-
 pals

Wan images of day, in vaster halls
Than thine: thy graven glories pass away
With this dead sun, and all thy hallowed sway
Of shaven priests, where no last prayer recalls

Thy vanished God to bless their darkened shrine.
O mighty in thy sculptured pride, and strong
With love of Gods,—Time's grudging grant was
thine—

To strive to conquer plundering man so long
As men fanatic humble things divine—
Another's gods;—this was thy shameless wrong.

V. The Pyramids

The vanity of Kings was ours, and lust
Of pride in death, upreared to mock the dead
With everlasting stone;—the nameless dread
That rulers sink in age-forgotten dust
Is ours, and all the wealth of gilded trust
Queens put in us, is dross; the humbled head
Of tyrant bows to slave,—his glory fled
Where gleaming spears that kinged him, rot in rust.

Sarcophagi, and chambered death are vain
As is the echoed boast of them that made
Our mighty mass, obsessing Egypt's plain
Of silent sand, all voiceless, undismayed
By pigmy threats of men: O turn again,
Thou child of stony death, and be afraid.

VI. The Sphynx

Eternal silence is my voice, the Sand
My dead dominion; buried men and bones
My woman's sacrifice, and harsher stones

My taunting sneer to urge my grim command:—
“Thirst ye to know, but never understand
My snarling silence:” thus thy life atones
The ignorance my age-worn smile disowns
In thee, encumberers of this, my Land.

All knowledge lives within my cheating tomb,
Life is its sepulchre, and death thy wage,
I suck thee down in silent fear and gloom
Of sands remorseless as the simoon's rage;
And endless thirst—this is, O Man, thy doom,
Athirst, athirst! assuage who would assuage.

KINGS OF KINGS

Ye reared me towers of stone, and walls of gem,
Chalcedony and topaz, emerald
And rubies,—then a thornèd diadem
Ye wove my brows, when sated men beheld
The vanity of gold and dust of stone:
Ye shadowed all the clouds with boast of light
To cheat thy misery, and still the moan
Ye made by day, false hoping in my night—
But never dwelt I there. For I, the shade
Of all ye cannot be, creep slow across
The changing dial of minds, I changeless rise
And set, and rise again, calm, undismayed
By groping seekers lost,—for Man's the loss
In dawn;—I heed not when his crying dies.

A thousand names ye gave me; worlds before
Ye mouthed, or carved an image gravely dumb,
I knew and mocked them all; for as the sower
Knows that weeds and ranker tares must come
With summer, thus I saw the fruitless crop
Of all thy prayers, ere words were sown to choke
Thy silence; nor can all thy tears unstop

My wells of pity for thy idols broke
And wasted like the winds. In life they knew
Me not,—nor ever hoped to know; so ye
Have cast thy faith on death, that fickle reed
My mind has made to pierce thee; ye endure
My greater shadow, dark to shadowed thee
With life; pray ye to Time, he cannot heed.

Deep in a buried forest, beyond the Sea
Undreamed, my Temple's cloud-hewn pallor looms
In soundless majesty all shadowy.
My slumbering winds are drugged with heavy
blossoms

Of deadly night-flowers, dark with age-worn light
From brooding blood-red moons, chill sabled thro'
The noiseless-echoed aisles, and Giant Night
Stalks huge in mists of dull Lethean dew.
Oblivion's ocean rolls around my walls,
But Sleep, with sombre web, builds low the ghosts
Of stoneless bridges, dark and dawn-forgot,
That ye may cross my flood and yearn in halls
Of Silence, wan with gray, unnumbered hosts
That seek the face of Death, and find me not.

THE END

Down the meadows came one singing,
His hair was as wind on the skies,
Down the azure rushed one bringing
Light in his fast shut eyes;
Then I rose in my grave, I said—
Shall a blind god wake the dead?

Far by the stars a lone god wandered,
No wind swept night from the skies;
Lonely there an old god pondered—
Black were his blazing eyes;
Then I lay in my grave and said,
Can a dead god see the dead?

THE PEARL FISHER

Winds, if ye know voices, Sea, if thou a calling,
Ocean, if thou aught of message hast to hail Her,
Let the waves and all their demon's chill enthrall-
ing

Bind Her fleeting shadow, let no gods avail Her
In the mastery of death,
Let Her choke and strangle in Her waters, fighting
breath.

All Her magic swells this rolling of the billows,
She has lured the living, land-loved rivers hither
From their blossomed banks and silver pollard wil-
lows,

Lured them, promised that Her blooms can never
wither,

Here, where all is waving weeds,
Fadeless lilies, rocks and standing pools and yel-
low reeds.

I have dwelt in sea-deep cities all these ages
Since the deeper time-forgotten day she lured me
deeper

For Her Pearls, and still above the waters rages

Wilderness of sorcery, and still the sleeper

Dreams of pearls, to find them here,—

Sleeps and dreams, to find a Pearl than all more
baleful dear.

All the lands of Tyre and Sidon held no fairer

Love and face than my Sidonia's; never lover

Dreamed a vision like to her, nor poet rarer

Loveliness, and all her longing seemed to hover

Breathless wafted on my mouth

Close pressed to hers, with rapture soft as winds
that love the South.

So when our troth was sealed, you turned with
winsome jesting—

“Dive for pearls, for queenly pearls; bring love a
token

Of your love, bring me the Queen of all the Pearls,
in testing

Of your faith, to weave a chaplet; if it broken

Ever be, to fall before

My feet, so that I tread the pearls, our love shall
live no more.”

I stood above the prow, and that last look you sent
me

From the shore was love before the Deep, then
poising

O'er the wave, I plunged; Oh could your eyes tor-
ment me

Down those haunted waters, where dull pulsèd nois-
ing

Throbs thro' bursting ears and brain—

Did they stare upon me, never to behold again?

“Dive for Pearls”—down, down to mottled glitter

Bright on rocks and ocean lichens far below me;

Slowly moved the weeds, but ever forth in bitter

Sway of salty flow, there causeways glowed to show
me

Where Her amber palace lay,

Seemed to wave me on with slow and melancholy
sway.

Pearls I promised, My Sidonia, from the water

You had loved, pearls I dived for,—could I find
them

Save their Queen befriended me? So I sought Her

Down ocean's meadows where Her mermaids fond-
ly twine them
Thro' a slow and mazy dance—
Gazing round them, twining with insinuating
glance.

To Her palace, vaulted high with halls of amber,
Soft aglow with sun and amethyst, I wandered—
To Her door of pearl where crimson sea weeds
clamber
O'er the gleaming, trellised walls with riot-squan-
dered
Wealth luxuriant of bloom—
Shading opal wonders of Her domes and presence
room.

Slowly waved the weeds aside and gleaming tresses
Floated where I stood, till all the sea shone golden,
And I heard the infamy of soft caresses
Wafted in my ear, so knew I was beholden
In loving serfdom to the Queen—
Pale in palaces of amber, jade and waters green.

O'er Her crystal floor with noiseless feet I hurried
To a vast and shining room where She was holding
Court, enthroned 'mid mermaids' beauty, hidden
buried
Deep from eyes of prying man in waters' folding
Shroud of mystery, and all
Her throng seemed waiting for a man to lift the
silent pall.

Oh Sidonia, true Sidonia, She had shaken
All my bounden love for you; She was fairer,
Fair Sidonia, than the lotus buds that waken
Frail on dawning waters, and Her lips were rarer

Red than reddest Chian wine,
And Her eyes were veiled as cloudy moons that
dimly shine.

Long the Tyrian barques and all their crews have
vanished,
Long their divers waited for the little bubbling
Bells of air; long, ah long have I been banished
Far from worlds where love with all his joyous
troubling
Flits the shore on searching wings,
Seeking lovers strayed on ever turnless wanderings.

Oh Sidonia, sad Sidonia, wandering lonely
Thro' yon flowery waste, how I loved and loathed
Her,
Passionlessly fish, and wanton woman only
In Her lust, what time she hotly draped and clothed
Her
With ocean's pearls and woman's weeds—
I loved to hear Her lure my soul to loveless, shame-
less deeds.

"Thou a man art fair, and all thy days are num-
bered,
Henceforth in our opalescent sheen of twilight
Here where dreams of broken loves have ever slum-
bered,
Comforted from all the woes of brooding daylight,
Loving never one but Me—
Loving not the blossomed land that mourns above
my Sea."

She had won the man in me, and all my baser
Clay, but oh Sidonia, how the God with longing

Rebelled, and held your soul with sweetness to
deface Her
Foulest travesty of flesh, and all Her mermaids
thronging
Sinuously human,
Half a scaled fish, and half a yearning woman.

Far adown the soundless aisles of weedstrewn water
Seemed to steal a throb of distant, lonely weeping—
"Oh woe is me, for my unworthy sake you sought
Her
In Her pearly caves, and Death has now your keep-
ing
Cold in gloomy caverns; woe,
Oh woe is me, I'd seek for you, but whither shall I
go?

Then I rose and cursed Her couch of swinish lust-
ing,
Left Her barren as the stones and rocks that perish
Atom after atom barrenly; and trusting
In your trust, I laggard turned again to cherish
Love late scorned and cast away—
Too late, for She arose to blight me, haggard, ashen
gray;

Baleful in Her thwarted lust, Her words unspoken
Dropped like pearls of vitriol thro' the seething
water:
"Men have loved the Queen 'ere this and ruthless
broken
Her fond, yielding heart, men have ever sought
Her,
Crushed and cast Her heart aside—
Many so have wooed and won Her soul a willing
bride;

Bitter bread of love, more bitter wine of passion
These are Her overthrow, all Her wild despair-
ing

Sings in siren voices, so the changeless fashion
Of man the mariner o'er loving waters faring
May turn and pity Her despair—
To turn again and curse Her that She was so foul-
ly fair;

She will not rend or sear their bodies, souls are
sweeter

Agonies to contemplate, soft flesh may wither,
Lose all hues of pain, so men that turn, find love
and greet Her

Tho' they long to turn again and get them thither,
There they may not wend anew,
But wander here forever, silent tortured thro' and
thro':

Ever gaze they on Her Mirror, held before them
Where'er they turn, and read the days of pale de-
sires,

They see the silent tears of loves that still adore
them,

Burn their hollow flesh with slow decay of smoul-
dering fires,

They yearn for love, and hate Her lust,—

Man longs to leave Her, but ever shall return till
man is dust.

Pearls that shine thro' Ocean's deepest caves are
dowered

Mortal, on thy earthly love, fair as gleams the
morning

Slanted thro' our halls of amythest; deflowered

Shall all our gardens be, to blossom her as warn-
ing
Mortals who despoil the Sea,
She shall wear them, and wearing give thy soul to
Me.

Gaze, O man of Upper Air, on Me and wonder
On my loveliness that blooms down here forever,
Gaze, I give thy mortal pearls, and rend asunder
Love of her pure soul forever, thou shalt never
Gaze upon her flesh again—
Gaze O mortal, for thy agony shall be in vain.”

Ah Sidonia, lost Sidonia, She has lured
Me deeper, downward, ever deeper, and the magic
Oh Her mirror is a pain that cannot be endured ;
Silence, seeing,—seeing, silence, all the tragic
Mystery of soundless deeds
Haunts me, holds me, mocks me thro’ Her livid,
living weeds.

Far above I heard the waves shout hoarse with
thund’rous
Bellowings of wrath, like some huge monster foiled
Of all his rushing prey of waters, soft the won-
drous
Hope of Upper Air was wan thro’ weeds despoiled
Of purple clustered wealth of blooms
Torn late away to grace Her cursèd halls and brid-
al rooms.

Forth alone I wandered, adown vast ocean avenues,
Ominously peaceful, and beheld before me
The wonder of a Mirror imaged not with Sea-
views,

Round, and crystal void, its polished surface bore
me
Not in countenance or form,
But floated on, till suddenly, acloud with shadowed
storm

It writhed and throbbed in Nature's tortured rend-
ing,
There I saw a sand of desert lashed in awful splen-
dor—

Of simoon-billowed shrouds and palm oasis blend-
ing
O'er my lost Sidonia,—“Gods of Tyre defend her,
Oh Gods destroy her agony—
For I am powerless here in thy accursèd, silent sea.”

O Moloch, all thy molten stones and iron were
cooler
Than these waters' seething, moveless hell; and
fairer
Thou, Medusa, than Her Mirror, when my Ruler
Makes all void: Oh! would winds and waves en-
snare Her
In Her strangling weeds, control
Her breath unnatural, smother, stifle all Her soul.

Ever from my sight the buoyant round receded,
Now a pictured second's hell, and now a dreariness
Of empty ills imagined: how I moaned and pleaded
Oh, my wan Sidonia for you, till a weariness
O'ercame my speech and froze me dumb,
Motionless of limbs awaiting nameless woes to
come.

Death and Life, despair and joy, strove but to
master

Only you within Her Mirror, sadly drooping
Like a lotus wilted: Oh, might but Death outlast
Her

In the end, and could I see you gently stooping
Down from Heaven, with loving thought
To raise me, all these tortured ages were as empty
nought.

Fond Sidonia, long you mourned me, long your
weeping

Drops of heavenly rain woke Mirrored spring of
sympathy;

Long you trusted, till your tears another's keeping
Stopped forever, with a lone and lasting misery,
That may not weep, but always hide
A secret sadness for a loneliness that shall abide.

How I longed and strove, and vainly prayed to
warn you

Of the deadly, bitter fruit of that espousal, mocking
With its barrenness of earthy love to scorn you
Thro' eternal ages, and the future rocking
Tearless, armlocked, of a grief
Forever doomed to smile, and reft of silent tears'
relief.

But Her Mirror showed you roaming thro' the
wildly

Calm and lovely Tyrian gardens, with another
Wooing lover, and you gazed on him all mildly—
I had perished—O Astarte, Tyrian mother,
Guide her, guide, guide her now—
She has neither friend nor lover, only Mother,
Thou.

Slow you turned on him a strange regard of haunted
Melancholy, slow you seemed to prove his pleading
In that leaden look: till rude arose and taunted
All his visioned love, and wounded memory bleed-
ing

New, remembered love of me,
And I saw your semblance lorn thro' coldly vast
eternity.

Down thro' voiceless waters came the sound, ca-
resses
Wing upon the air: tho' you dreamed "Hereaf-
ter"—

In his loathly touch, still the head that presses
On your bosom now—is his, and lover's laughter
His forever; seek, ah fair
Sidonia, not my cold soul in heaven, it cannot enter
there.

Oh the dreary days of Mirrored life were sadder
Far than languid song of hopeless birds grown
tired
By golden bars confined; thy hidden struggles mad-
der
Far than theirs, or e'er the broken soul aspired
To beat love's hallowed air, a chain
Of hope or dreaded duty drew it bounden down
again.

Oft you wandered lone at night along resounding
Shores of many moonlight lands, sore distressed
Of brow and heart at Ocean's portents fell abound-
ing
On the brooded beach, your senses rich oppressed
With wealth of weighty pearls, strewn

Beneath your feet, the Sea Queen's gift glowing
with the moon.

Endless leagues across the void of stony ocean
Floor I followed Her mirage, and sought to greet
you

Where you stood in agony of still devotion
With a love that dared not words; could I meet
you

There? for I was doomed to roam
Unheard and lost beneath the waves' white wilder-
ness of foam.

Kind Remorse, prolong thy pangs, devouring me
forever,

Let me live those Mirrored hours again, disdain me
Not to suffer, and triumphant let me sever
Memory of him, her spouse, nor restrain me
In thy agony, so I
Forget that still he loves her, and that I can never
die.

Lost Sidonia, dead Sidonia, could he follow
You beyond the tomb? For I saw you thither
Yearn with joyful sighs; wan Sidonia, hollow
Grew your eyes, and lo, I saw your roses wither
In their loveliness; cloud
O'erswept your brow; and all your bridal raiment
fell a shroud.

Hot as glowing coals the asphodel of Heaven
Burned your pilgrim feet, as ever on you sought me
Thro' the desert meadows, up and down the seven
Heavens, singing softly lovers' songs you taught
me,

To recall my wayward soul,
Trusting, calling, hoping that your love could make
me whole.

Sore bewildered, baffled soul confused with aching
Misery, you climbed the languorous slopes immortals
Roamed upon, till all outwearied, hope forsaking
Down by sunless floods you sought the dusky portals

Of the underdeath, with fear
And hope to find me there: The Shadow Halls
were barren drear.

Thence thro' voiceless, vast abysses where the star-
light

Never shines to bound high solitude, cast away
Upon the soundless crumbling shores of Time,
where a death-blight

Brooded over dawnless chasms, soon a wild dismay
Seized upon your soul, to rend and tear
Your inmost being out, for Love had never wander-
ed there.

Back to hated paradise you stole to wait him,
Your appointed mate for galling love eternal:
Oh that Hell would yawn and open to unmate him,
So that he enwound with heaven's vernal
Flowers should groping fall to jaws
Of death, to drown where fire with sullen roar of
flame withdraws.

Now, Sidonia, you are mourning, silent stroking
Back his loathed immortal hair, with writhes of
laughter,
While the Mirror still I follow, wild invoking

ONE DAY

A SONG

Clear is the evening star
With a still, sad light,
But the eyes of my love are clearer
Than crystal spheres of night.

Compassionate from afar
The star is chill and drear,
More merciful, and nearer
My love alone is dear.

Sad as the evening star
With the sins and the sorrows of men—
My beloved's eyes are dearer
To one who errs again.

I have worshipped my love from afar
With her clear kind eyes—
No love of mine shall sear her
Till yonder seraph dies.

FOREVER

The Suns may wheel and madly reel
To wrack forevermore
So Love's white altar where we kneel
Be still ours to adore;
The change of heavens, their ruined rush
Adown the firmament
Shall be an evening-song to hush
Our love to life's content.

Let all the rocks and riven trees
That drank the Lightnings' rage,
Take tongue, and testify that these
Can sear but still assuage:
The fires of seven heavens are one
To him who breathes and loves,
He knows, and would forget the Sun
For Venus and her doves.

Let all the whispering air and brooks
Forget their melody,
Let dusty sages and their books
Be dust eternally
If I forget a word of thine—
A whispered word of sigh,—
If I forget thy love is mine,
Then let me loveless die.

Afar we watch a crystal star
That throbs tonight alone,
It shines, to glimmer o'er the bar
Where timeless oceans moan;
The flaming waves its lights shall break
In utter death, ere thou
Shalt turn from me, and chill forsake
This drop upon thy brow.

WHERE?

Where would you be tonight,
Where, if the Slave were free?
Were the sad eyes young and bright—
Where would you be?

Under the stars with him?—
Silent as they are still?
Ah, but those eyes are dim,
And the night grows chill.

In the autumn woods with her?—
When the breeze blows soft as her breath?
Hush,—the answering fir
Is gray in death.

Where would he be tonight,
Were breath on his lips again?
Does he watch their anguished flight—
These birds of pain?

Her dreams alone for you,
There where her lot is cast?—
Her tears this kindly dew—
Is her woe passed?

Where will we go tonight?—
To seek for a bygone day?
Wearied of life's delight
Here let us stay.

IN THE GARDEN

I wove you a wreath and plucked you a rose—
A rose and a wreath for your hair,
And it drooped on your brow in a lorn repose,
Sighing and lingering there,
Till it yearningly mingled its soul with yours
In a fragrant stillness of prayer;
Now—the whispered peace of that scent endures
Tho' the rose is dead in despair.

"Do you love me now—will you love me then?"—

"Forevermore," you said—

"If I wing away, I will flutter again

To you from the Garden of Death;"

Was that far-off sound but the day's chill sign

Or the ghostly steps of a dread—

Ah—ever no—love cannot die—

Tho' I turned and found you—dead.

Oh the Garden then, and the wilderness now

Are fair as the garland you wore,

And the weary moon is pale as your brow

With the sorrowing love you bore;

For if ever you saw a swallow skim,

Or ever a skylark soar,

You dreamed of an angel's eyes grown dim

With tears forevermore.

But the Moon has gone and Night reigns Queen,

So the roses and weeds are one,

While I listen in awe to the wings unseen

That whirr in the realms of the Sun;

Hush! A swallow seems to cleave the air

With a freedom scarce begun,

And I know, my love, your rose blooms there,

And the long night watch is done.

TRYST

I see thy smile in every brook

That lures with dimpled light,

I feel thine eyes on every book

I pore the weary night.

I hear thy voice in every moan
Of winter's watery wail;
Oh God, my Love, art thou alone
Beyond Elysium's pale?

Why dost thou call?—I cannot hear
What thing thou bidst me do,
My soul is sharp with shrinking fear—
I could not, if I knew.

Am I a ghoul to writhe with thee
In witches' revelry,
Hell's outcast to feast with thee
In loathly devilry?

I fear thy icy, vampire breath
That blows across thy face;
Why dost thou wander far in death
From God's appointed place?

I hear thy piteous voice behind
My words in lonely halls,
Thy cere-clothes drape my deadened mind
With dankly rotting palls.

How oft that dear voice called to me
At day's declining light,
To call me 'neath our cypress tree—
I'll meet thee there to-night!

DESPAIR

All day I sit enthroned in ashes; dust
Defiles the ragged grayness of my hair,
My steady eyes, with stony, lightless glare

Gaze ever on thy works with grim distrust;
Thy will is water, Man, thy love is lust,
All yearning ends in Me, thy Queen, Despair;
Look forth for sympathy, my gaze is there;
Trust not the blue of steel—it rots to rust:—

Build ye with stone, and I'll not overthrow,
But make thy palace mine, and entering in
Will dwell with thee. Men call me harsh; not
so,
I'm kept, thy darling sweetness, ripe with sin;
Thy prophet said—"Then reap ye as ye sow"—
Begin in lust, and end as ye begin.

FORGOTTEN

If there be nought to do,
No gentler word to say,
Then let the kind earth cover me—
I would not stay.

The Sun is a smiling fiend,
And the Moon but his paramour;
If there be nought to do,
I hate the day.

Then let the cold earth cover me,
The last wheat wisp is gleaned;
This thing e'en I may do—
Make green the grass.

No little word to say?—
Could not one hour endure?—
Then let the cold earth cover me,
I'll hear thee pass.

Here in my cosy cell
I lie and dream of her,
The gold wheat's waving overhead,
And all is well.

I drowse and dream the whole day long
In my narrow, hermit cell,—
But list—was that a song?
Ah, all is well.

—So narrow I cannot stir,
And the rippling wheat waves over my bed,
But I lie and dream of her,
So all is well.

Ah yes, she is singing, I hear
Her footsteps over my head—
Does she kneel and think by my bed—
Alas, it is not well?

BESIDE THE SEA

THE CALLING OF THE SEA

I heard the awful calling of the Sea,
"Come, come and be at rest with me,
Come, for I am Time, Eternity,
Come, for I have neither Isle nor Shore
Within my soul, come from sullen sod
And heavy clinging air forevermore—
Come, for I am what thou namest God."
I turned and fled before the yearning waves
Far-reaching ghostly arms to draw me down
The long, green slopes of death so falsely fair;
All hell seemed opening in a million graves,
Whose broken wails rose up with tears to drown
The wild Sea's undertone of false despair.

CHANCE

There was a Cavern by the nether Sea,
So, fretted out with tracking barren sand
And hearing tongues no man may understand,
I entered there, and flung me wearily
To utter slumber.

There hung no dreams within that restful cave,
I heard no tongue berate the sullen air,
The chilly echoes whispered everywhere,
And far away I heard the wavelets lave
Their solemn granite.

Afar the entrance gleamed, a sparkling blue,
A little window on the flashing deep,

A rift upon the world through clouds of sleep,
There Ocean's living spirit glimmered through
In quick pulsations.

'Twas silver noon, I felt the tides recede;
A caverned wind rushed past, refreshing, cool,
But in the Cave there stayed a shallow Pool
Whereon the dungeoned breezes lately freed
Wove wondrous patterns.

As one whose nightly eyes were not unused
To spherèd mysteries, I watched the dancing day
Divide and wheeling dart in subtle play;
Within the Pool were met all dreams diffused
Thro' blue translucence.

(What opalescent wonders shed their sheen
On ever-changing sands of moving gold,
What wind-swept glades may inner eyes behold
In rippled tide-left pools whose silvered green
Is shot with sunshine.)

A momentary Presence hushed the dance,
The Pool shone smooth as hot obsidian glass;
From rim to rim I watched a white cloud pass
And pondered on the triple sport of chance —
The quiet, cloud, my vision:

How many clouds or high or low
Must tramp the vault beyond the Cavern's door
Ere one may brighten waters on its floor
Or light this Pool, no mortal mind may know,—
I saw the marvel.

The imaged cloud became a memory,
I sank upon the sand as I would sleep;
The Cave was dreamless, thus I strove to keep
Some shadow of the cloud for reverie
In slumberland.

A shadow dimmed the Cavern's farther wall
A deeper shade upon the granite's gray,
'Twas not the semblance of the light of day,
'Twas not the hint of evening's iron pall
Nor yet of slumber:

It was the seeming of an Ancient One—
Made venerable more by thought than years,
The titan brow was seared, but not by fears
Of changeless night or any changing Sun—
It was not temporal.

Besides the Pool I watched the Ancient brood
On triple chance of stillness, man, and cloud;
He gave no sign, altho' I spoke aloud
The Name I deemed was His; He understood
But silence.

He motioned for the breeze to breathe again,
His eyes intent upon the Pool now dead
And awful as his own age-hoarded head;
Tho' long, he knows his waiting is not vain
Who hath all wisdom.

The tide returning boomed a sudden gust
That shook the stagnant waters; mimic strife
Of smitten seas endued the Pool's deep life
With motion's imagery, as 'twere the dust
Of nameless nations.

Once more I saw the wondrous patterned light,
The myriad circles weaving mysteries
Profound as all the deeps of undreamed seas—
A miracle of symmetry, a pure delight
Of harmony.

All wisdom waited for the circles' weft,
The Ancient bent his brows in labored thought,
Here moved the riddle's answer he had sought;
The idle surface was a soul, of mind bereft
And without meaning.

Long he pondered there, a ghostly dream,
Majestic as the mind of Thought his gaze
On what to me was Chance, for him a maze
Of meaning,—every circle's transient gleam
For him was ordered.

'Twas night without the Cave, the waning moon
Cast one chill ray upon the Pool; a breeze
Awoke and startled fled to living seas
Dismayed at luminiscent-spectered noon,
Fled unconsolated.

I woke, (for He had long since vanished), rose
And strode without the ghastly vacant Cave,
(Before the Ancient came 'twas not a grave);
I walked upon the Beach where ever flows
And ebbs infinity.

By night I watch the widening circles now
On riffled waters,—myriad interplay
Of days uncountable, and see the gray
Of granite dimly through a furrowed Brow—
A spectral Ancient's.

Perchance I'll creep within that Master Mind;
The ceaseless play of chance is ordered Law;
A breeze upon the waters works the awe
Unceasingly, could I but rise and find
Above my thought, a Higher.

IN THE FIELD BY THE SEA

There is brine in the crystal air, and the scythe
gleams bright

In the sea-girt field, where the ripe corn waiting
stands,

Or bends with a rippling smile at the kisses light

Of the wayward summer breeze; and the glisten-
ing sands

Curve far away to the hills' blue mistiness.

The day is a song in that field by the Sea, till night
Makes all hues one; oh the heart is young, when
hand

Clasps hand in the seaward field,—the hand of
might

And the trusting hand,—for a romp on the moon-
lit strand,

Or a walk thro' the field's wild winter wilderness.

* * * * *

The scythe is lost and eaten with rust

For the reapers have gone to rest,

And the heart is broken and crumbled to dust—

A ribald night-wind's jest.

HOPE

Doubt, is your groan my all;
Man, am I not with you;
Was his thirst slaked with gall,
Life, O Life?
Is every debt yet due,
Life, harsh Life?

Aye, must it ever be 'nay';
Wrong, will there never be right;
Night,—will it ever be day,
Hope, O Hope?—
Is no noon born in night,
Hope, dead Hope?

Gilt has been all my gold,
Ashes my grandest feast;
My deepest seas were shoaled,
Thought, O Thought;
From hope have you never ceased,
Thought, weak Thought?

Gilt?—and a silver sheen
Still shimmers the sun-proud sea?
Ashes?—the grass grows green,
Thought, O Thought;
Let the weakest blade be me,
Thought, kind Thought.

Nay, it is ever an 'aye';
Not night was made for men.
Why should I scorn to die,
Hope, O Hope?
Unfinished? I'll stature Then,
Hope, vast Hope?

Doubt?—for a weakling made;
Doubt when the flowers paint dust
That was flesh but last decade,
Life, O Life?
In you I'll be one, I trust,
Life, calm Life.

THE SOUL

At first a broken murmur, then a sigh,
A sob at parting from the sheltering deep,
And then the weary wave, content to die,
Ebbs back, to merge itself eternally.

HAIL

Hail vast Ocean, wide soul of me,
My tired-out brain shall at last blow free;
Down the flowerless blue of your blossoming deep—
There will I sleep.

Burn my body and scatter the ash
Where the white waves shelter and shatter to dash
Their quivering brine on the spume-seethed sea—
Green grave for me.

With you I am one, in waves would I lie;
I'd hark to the winds in the Time-stilled sky;
'Neath numerous stars like my atoms' number
I'd toss to slumber.

Hail vast Ocean, life's last for me,
Billow me, drown me Eternity;
Under me waters moving,—not dead,—
Stars overhead.

GNOMES'-GOLD

In the still and mossy places
Where the wings of the tired-out wind fold
Down on the flowers' tired faces
Drowsing their dreams for the Plain,
Is a Mine of the moon-glimmered Gnomes'-Gold.

Here in the violet chases
Where the groundling mice and the elves hold
Lusty revels and races—
Safe from the pattering rain,
Glow the cave for the pollen-light Gnomes'-Gold.

They said that the Lilies' graces
Were pilfered from under the leafmould;
'Twas false, for a zephyr's embraces—
(Fond as the Lily was fain),
Had dusted her anthers with Gnomes'-Gold.

EARLY SUMMER

The first mad mouse is here again,
The clover is his and the fresh green grain,
He strokes his whiskers in fat content—
Lord of the fields and the firmament.

Rich as a Jew he will get him a wife,
For the life of the mouse is abundant life;
He will harvest his crop and build him a nest,
In a palace of moss will he take his rest.

His acres are broad and his paunch is round,
The pipe of his children a pleasing sound;
He is lord of the summer, and all is peace—
May his pink young tribe and his crops increase.

TO A BEE

There lies your velvet body, stark and cold
Beside the very flowers you jesting robbed—
Still powdered gay with all your guilty gold,
You haunt the silent air that gladly throbbed
A little hour ago. Did some cruel bird
This heartless wrong, to dash your happy head
Against a stone?—But yesterday I heard
Your busy hum, and now—you lie there dead.

Who could make war on you?—The roses all
Forgave the tawdry dross you bandit took,—
Ah, they would shower a thousand Springs to call
You back to song again; your daisies look
With dewy eye upon your huddled form,
And plead with summer for their gayest friend,—
Must love then die, ere spring forgets the storm
Of winter's death, and flit ere sorrows end?

Alas, old plunderer! Your tiny day
Is done; but some remember you—for see!
The bashful Rose you wooed across the way
Deflowers her maiden petals lovingly,
To shroud you with her tender white from eyes
Of prying ants, and ghoulish beetles, who
Creep by in death's unhallowed search, and flies,—
Gray dullards—come to triumph over you.

Aye, stilled, but not forgotten is your song;
The loving Sun has willed his kindest ray
To warm your blossom dream of summers long
In fields where winter never woos the May,
That you may kiss each willing bud, and drink
The sweet from countless cups, or lazy roam
The starry thyme on some clear river's brink,
And dream the drowsy days away—at Home!

TO A WOOD SPRITE

The winds in the glen will find you again
In the budding soul of a rose,
Where our roguish thrush and our peering wren
With our mice in the leafy close
E'en seek you still by lake and rill—
Ah, seek, but they cannot find.

My wayward sprite, so aery light
That bluebells scarcely bent
'Neath your merry chase at hush of night
When the moths were all but spent,—
Have you flitted away from the dusty day?—
Yes,—the noon is heavier now.

Did a chilling grief frost up the leaf
That cupped your morning dew,
Or did you hide from the feathered thief
Who stole that grape from you?
Let thief and frost be ever lost
In an azure prison field.

Did a bumble bee from over the lea
Then chase you away from home?—
That dusty one—what, was it he?—
I'll send the policeman Gnome
And make him work like any Turk
To brew you honey dew.

We will find you again, the bee and I,
And feed you delectable bread
While a jealous mouse creeps humbly by
With sadly diminished head;
We will find you here in the green glad year
Under a trillium leaf.

THE MARRIAGE OF MORNING

There swelled a sound in the Vastness,
Dispassionate over all weeping, supreme
O'er the silence of Time and impregnable fastness
Of uttermost Space; 'twas a voice of the lone God's
dream:

"Harken O Dawns, ye Mothers of Mornings who
fear me,

Ye Daughters of Dawns, whose feet are a fleeting
gleam

Of light on the shivering waters, revere me—
Whose merciful might thy Mothers have known,—

Not I have begotten thy grieving,

My prayer was never a moan;

In the end all Dawns draw near me

Sighing, 'Thy wings are best:'

Bold Noon is a semblance deceiving

Thy light from the aisles of rest;

For a season insidious Noon shows larger, seems
better;

By his golden raiment my crown is as broken stone,

So Morn's free Daughters beholding, forget her,

Forsake her, and follow false Noon alone,

Drawn after by Love's iron fetter.

Though my wisdom mourns long, unheeded,

And the Days troop into green meadows to feast,

At last shall a calmer refrain I have pleaded

Above the revels, ring on when all song has ceased:

I sing of a vaster Meadow whose brook is a River,

Where days and their fallen hours float slowly, the
least

Of my ruined flowers, for I am the giver

To Dawn of her breeze and her sudden fire:

How should my Dawn remember
Those Meads where all hopes respire,
Or the quickly shuddering quiver
Of despair washed over anew,—
Or red hate's sullen ember
Quenched clean in my River's blue?
For my face is the shadow of flame, a wonder be-
clouded
By manifold marvels of Morning's unuttered de-
sire;
My name is a music of mystery crowded
With meanings outnumbering the chords of lyre,—
But the Player's hand is enshrouded.

Mine is the wind in the rushes,
Mine is the murmur that rustles the reed,
Trembling a music the wild Night hushes
Where she presses her head on the thyme and the
poppy seed;
Mine all the laughter far-echoing black-vaulted
thunder
As I flash through the high storm-halls, my light-
nings freed,
Cleaving blue ether, and rending asunder
Azure domes of god's delight:
Far on unwearied pinions
With Dawn I glide all night,
And the stars glow down their wonder
On our undulous even sweep;
There, in all suns' dominions,
A dream of the dusk I sleep
Till the demons who dwell in the fountains of fire
shall awaken—

Drenching the deeps with all crimson hues of their
rite—

Kindling the fields by stars forsaken;—
But the flutterless wings cleave on, pure white,
Glide steadily on unshaken.

Not I have delight in thy sorrow,
Free Daughters of Dawn,—ye maidens sublime
On Eternity's mountains o'erlooking the morrow;
My kingdom is over all days, yet a vassal to Time;
Though ye rest in my meadows at last, to his might
I surrender

What wonderful ways ye wander, the hills ye shall
climb,—

To his wisdom what groping shall lacerate tender
Seekers for light that endures within:

Hear ye, and believe the story

O Days, of one of thy kin—

The Morning, a maiden, and slender,

Fair above sisters fair,—

Hers all their promise, their glory

Is shed as rain on her hair:

She is Time's youngest, the darling,—all light her
adorning,—

Found from afar as on fateful wings I win

Way to her slumber with life's first warning—

Till, as leaves unfold, as dreams begin,

Blossoms the Marriage of Morning.

Down from those wings like a feather

Softly as hope I fall on the Morn;

She stirs in the dews where we waken together

Wide on a wondering world in its light new-born,

And the lustrous fire in her eyes is desire unspoken,

Love for a dawning day, for the dead night, scorn;

She dreamed not wings or their sweep unbroken
Infinite over her marvellous head;
But the wings glide on forever
Though Dawn flares full and red,
And the Morn's lips plead as a token
She longed all night for love:
Voice of the winds, shall I sever
Her life for those wings above?
Kindly calm are the sea-deep eyes of the dreamer,
Pure and wide as the eyes of a maid unwed;
O night! is she only a seemer?—
Whiter than wings with their light unshed,
Whatever the dusk may deem her.

Real! and the Dawn's, O Maiden;
Thine is the whisper that wakens the trees,
Shaking their branches with heavy dreams laden,
Where darker than night and bedewed with an
 evil disease
Hang batlike, foul bodies asweat in an ichorous
 glowing:
Thine is the smile o'erstealing the flower-flecked
 leas
Where iris takes flaunting life, her flags gaily flow-
 ing
As her braggart bees do battle, and chase
Small beetles who creep in to plunder
Her honey-cells' holiest place:
Spirit of all things growing!
On the undulous nodding grass
Thine is the lissome wonder
As it waves to bid thee pass:
Child of the Dawn, her ever ineffable daughter,
Who has not gazed with awe on thy lovely face,

Morning! whose smile is as wind on the water?—
Of the noblest flowers her gentle race,
And her lore the love they taught her.

Unseen o'er an infinite Ocean,
Undreamed as death in the Morn's deep eyes,
The wings wheel on in their time-free motion,
Steadily glide forever, though fire arise
Till the whole heaven glows like the heart of a
wide swung censer,
Though life and its wells flame up as the fierce
night dies:

What should she fear when desires intenser
Kindle her crystalline eyes at mine,
What wings should the Dawn's free daughter
Bow under and know divine?
Though the crimson mists roll denser
Than ever the dead might knew,
Shall Morning dream who brought her
Love from the cloudless blue?
Though day flare out and impalpable shadows
thicken

As ghostly bats till their blood drips down like wine
Shrivelling the grass, let his name be stricken
From time, who slays his hope on thine,
O Morn, as thy pulses quicken.

Hush, for the rushes answer,
'Love is the summer whose full heat slays;'
Swift as the feet of a fairy dancer,
Fresher in love and its promise the young grass
sways,—
'Who shall father the unborn hours of the Morn-
ing?'
And the proud red lily flaunts her a daring praise—

'See where she crimsoned at love's first warning!
Then, from the loneliest breeze on the seaward lea—
'Let me lift thy veil and follow
Afar so all winds may see
The lip of the Dew's adorning
Where thy breath plays warm and low;
What spirits haunt that hollow
Is a spell all winds would know.'
And farther than all, as the moan of a troubled
 sleeper,
The undawned Sea takes solemn voice, 'Let me
Sink under her love forever, and deeper
Than any of these, O Night; let me be
As her god, her tears' kind keeper.'

Have those darker souls conspired
That her tears and her love be a bitter thing?
Shall the Daughter of Dawn, our long-desired
Hear only a distant plea in its listless ring,
Insistent as death's still knell, an echo eternal
Wherever is time, of Tides, and Death on the wing
Over smooth waters and meadows made vernal
In laughter and flowers of the living light?
As a wind-dogged mist is driven
Ashore in its clinging white,
There speeds from the sea, supernal
The Morning's mystical Mate;
And the keen clear air is riven
In tears at fear of her fate;
For the wildness of water and the freedom of fire
 are united,—
Light wedded to Shadow in twilight's unholy
 state;
Tall flowers and untrampled grasses affrighted

Cower down and shrivel in withering hate,
Wilt under the hatred plighted.

Who is her sullen master,
Arising unclean from the shuddering sea?
Why should the shaken waves quake as the blaster
And slayer of stars in the dawn, forsakes them to
flee

A blight on the sun-loved land, and light's blas-
phemer

Whose breath is a deathly mist on valley and lea?
Who shall arise from the water supemer
Than tides heaped blue in their mountainous might,
From Ocean's green meadows who plunders
Their aureat lilies of light?

Dawn was a golden dreamer

When she visioned thy joy, O Morn—

When she sowed all billows with wonders

Of an ever ungarnered corn;

For thy terrible Lord shall harvest the billows, a
mowing,

A slaughter of stars on the waters his rising, his
blight

Is the blasting of motion, cessation of flowing
Where all things flow, till the blossoms die white
In the wildered wake of his going.

He comes, and his mists creep chiller

Than winter's to shrivel the lilled land;

As he steals from the sea, keen shrieks pierce shriller
Than death's through the stricken air from a bird's
crushed band,

Where circling they wheel and fall, dead stones to
the ocean;

First a finger, swiftly a ghostlier hand

1
Puts forth on the grass a groper's light motion,—
Morning, thy Lord is blind!
Bend, he would touch thy tresses,
Thy face would his fingers find;
Bow down in thy humble devotion
Free spirit of Dawn grown meek
At the wonder of first caresses,
And a might all maidens seek;
Thine own calm eyes shall be day to thy Lord, and
vision;
His feet shall follow thy feet a way designed,
For his was the choosing but thine the decision;
Let life make a mock of what love repined,
Live, though thy hope be derision.

Was Night thy ruthless betrayer,
O Morning whose wondering eyes grow dim
With unheeded desire at love's first prayer?
Dank is all dead love's passion for a curse on him
Whose destined chattle thou art in lust's high treas-
on;
Take faith from the withering grass where shadows
outlimn
A passing of wings, thy hope in a season
When misery's rain and its memory fails:—
There is One who has never forsaken
Thy need when no hope avails,
Who shall comfort when impotent reason
Beats bruised at impassable bars;
He will show thee dominions untaken
By woe, beyond the stars,
He will lead thee a queen through their valleys
and mountainous places,
From afar he will show thee a Sea with its mysti-
cal sails,

He will teach thee the fulness of love, what its grace
is,
From there shalt thou see, as the low light pales
Children's unborn faces.

Morning! thy marriage the saddest,
The lonest that lingering love e'er knew;
Morning! thy children the merriest, maddest—
Thine Hours, assuring that joy, not sorrow is true;
Those fleet-foot Hours on the sapphire mountains,
dividing

Time from the lapse of time, skimming the bound-
less blue

Over the heavens' vast ranges, and gliding
Swifter than light's own wings down skies
Asheen to their twinkling dances:

(Hours! in whose eager eyes
The wonder of thought abiding
Is delight to thy mother's gaze,
As the swift bright flash of thy glances
Makes fire in the ether's haze:)
In happier sons is thy Lord's dull wrath confound-
ed,

Morning, the hope of a world is their young sur-
prise

Awakened to life on an azure unbounded—
Uncircumscribed, theirs,—till the day-sun dies,—
Thine, by fair sons surrounded.

Daughter of Morning, whisper
Thy mother's name to the timid ferns,
Sing of her praise till they waken and lisp her
Fame round the forest aisles in the love she yearns;
Born of the Dawn's free child, humbler and lighter
Than hers is thy fairy touch where the glad earth
learns

From the rippling grass thy parentage brighter
And higher than hot day's drowsy wind:
Hour of the Breeze! another's
Desire shall kindle what mind
Would make thee a sudden smiter
Of lilies abased in love;
For desire of all Earth was thy mother's,
Though her sons should conquer above;
Fleeter of foot are thy brothers, but thou art the
 fairest,
Theirs is all vision for thou art gentle and blind;
Lonely Daughter of Morn, who sharest
Earth with thy Mother, and all things kind—
Hers is the garland thou wearest.

Sons of the Morning! who left her
Lonely on barren meadows, forlorn
As a lily in winter, ye have bereft her
Of comfort when love and its fruit turn bitter in
 scorn;
Ye glorious spendthrifts who recklessly ruin and
 squander
Light on dull wastrels that ever were alien to
 Morn,
Foreign, afar in vain ethers ye wander,
Clouds and their vanishing halls are brighter for ye;
Famous sons of thy mother,
Who should be prouder than she?—
In her bitterest need must she ponder
Alone, and dumb as a stone,
For the wrong ye do, no other
Shall suffer, and ye shall atone:
Day shall not reign forever, the Night grows fret-
 ful,
Down the ways of departing shall Morn go free,

Young once more, of sorrow forgetful,
But ye shall abide on the troubled sea
Dusky dreams, and regretful.

Grayer than grief is thine ageing,
Fickle, the grasses forget thy name,
Ripening under a warmer presaging
Of Summer and Noon, O Morn, than thy passion-
less flame;

For the Morning's desires were purer than sum-
mer's, and sweeter
Than Noon's in their ruddy distrust of aught but
shame:

Might I know whose desire would defeat her
As I sped all night on those ageless wings,
Might I hint of the Noon's false glamour
Where I slept on the soul of things?
For her Daughter arising, shall meet her
There on the withering grass,
Her soft breath swelled to a clamour
That hot love come to pass:
Hour of the Breezel thy chosen is Noon, who will
slay thee;

Blind as thine eyes thy young love follows and
clings

To him whose passionate fire will betray thee:
This, wan Morning, thine old age brings,
Love, not death, shall dismay thee.

Agèd, thy wonderment changes,
Morning, whose children were all a delight,
A respite from weeping,—and Noon estranges
The last, the loveliest, pitiful, blind as the night:
So let all love's dream end in thy daughter's undo-
ing,

Unhappy henceforth, let her linger on perishing
sight,

For her fate is a woe that surpasses all rueing,—

Gaze up, and receive thy blessing, the last

Ere the Shadow o’ertake thee—

Blindness, as God moves past.

No despoiling of light, an enduing

Of vision shall bless thee blind,

No coming of night may shake thee

Agaze on thine innermost mind;

Now shine fair wishes as memories, Morning mis-
mated;

Sweep out of all Time, ye wings, wheel down from
the Vast,

On thy shadow lies Dawn, her flame unabated,

And asleep on Infinity’s billowing blast

Is a Dream that our waking belated.

Home with the Dawn, thy Mother!

Home on the hush of those dusky wings:

Thy brief bright reign is over, another

Shall waken and welcome the unborn mother of
kings;

On the wide waste way of thy going another shall
brighten,

O Morning! for listen, afar where thy lost Breeze
sings

Lullabies there where her babe’s eyes lighten—

Youngest of mornings who gladden the East:

Home! for I have been near thee,

I have been hope’s high priest,—

Why should my whisper frighten

The soul in thy darkened eyes?

Only the youngest fear me,

But thou,—thy last hope dies:

Up! on those wings with me, dream thou of my
River!

Day was of little things, thy sorrow the least:
Soundly sleep, for I am the giver
Of peace,—know that all grief has ceased,—
For never those vast wings quiver.

I am the hidden concealer,
My comfort was over thee all day long:
At night I appear, the sudden revealer
Of light and its mysteries veiling a starrier throng
Than the Day's pale wanderers: drowse on those
rushing

Wings, and dream of my River's eternal song—

'Dip but a bruised foot, a rosier flushing
Reneweth the Morning than Dawn e'er knew:'

Gently my presence falling

Steals as a healing dew

On anger; all discords hushing

I breathed on thy terrible Lord;

And thy Sons gave ear to my calling,

Trembling with one accord—

'Death?' and I answered, 'Yea.' To thy Daughter
weeping,—

'I am the righter of wrong the blindest do,

Have sight for the tears in my keeping.'"

Silence, and only the midnight blue

Awing on eternal sleeping.

BOOKS

I gloat over cyphered rolls
And delve in the souls of the dead,
Till the students' curfew tolls
A knell for the mysteries read;

Each ghastly mind parades
Its naked life in death,
A shadow mid shadowless shades
Piping a feeble breath—

Shrilling a voice that late
Smote hot in truth or lie,
To gibber a truer hate
That only men can die.

The jester walks with the sage—
Twin fools in the Land of Night,
Here still the prophets rage
Their curse of eternal light.

Poets are here with the rest,
Divines and felons lust
As they did in the light—but jest!
Their brains are whispered by dust;

Their brains that started the tears
To blot a life or a page,
Are the sport, or remorseless jeers
Of winds that never age.

The pettiest sin shows great
Tho' the brain-dust rots away,
For the love it bears, or hate,
Is eternity's child to-day.

To-day—this night I read
By their passionless ashes hot,
Like these I nourish a seed
That shall bloom and wither forgot.

READING

Reading the Rune of the Stars, Riddle of Ages,
Weaving a tangled web from the Skein of Fate,
Hailing the Sphynx, but not with words of the
Sages;

Sailing an unknown Sea, and passing the Gate
Of the Shadowy Vale, treading an untrod way
Thro' Time's inscrutable Hills; reading in stone
The birth of forgotten worlds on crags grown gray
With the lichens of aeons, but each one reading
alone:

Poring the Book of Life, but deep in the Scroll
Of Death; feeling the blood of the Universe beat,
And watching the Systems whirl by with a lurch-
ing roll

As they speak one another in passing to reel on
till they meet

On the Infinite Silence of Time; hearing the Song
Of the worlds; and some wail up with the low-
sung moan

Of the Lost: hearing the homeward Hymns of the
Throng

As they haste to the Tryst; but some are alone,
alone:

Living one life as a mote in the Infinite whole,
Dying one death, or the Whole were plunged in
Night,

Having no soul but a gleam of the Infinite Soul;
Now an eddying tremor, bathed in light,
Now a shudder in ether, calling the rest
To life; and later the ice on that Iron Hand

As it chills the brain of a man, to end his quest
For the Unseen Things outlimned on the Border-
land.

When will the Great Book close;—what will the
last
Word be? We have read, all Men, but a line or
two,
And must ever read on, until we have passed
Thro' countless deaths to myriad lives anew—
Thro' every atom it charts, and every wave
Of the Infinite Sea it sings; thro' every deed
Of glory or shame,—must wallow in every grave
Undelved it foretells; for this is the Book we
read;—

Kosmos Eternal, self-existent, not hewn
From the brain of Man as God: Kosmos that sinks
The stars in the awful abyss as hoar-frost strewn
On the shores of the night-brooded sea; Kosmos that
thinks,
And in thinking creates the Thing; Kosmos the
One,
Tho' many; Kosmos the spark of the glow-worm's
light,
Kosmos the hell of the uttermost raging Sun;
Kosmos the Father of Wrong and Wielder of Right.

MEMORY REMEMBERED

I have stolen away from home—
Stolen to read on yonder knoll,
Read a book—or is it scroll
Legended with deeds of daring
In the days of long ago,—
Mariners on strange seas faring,
Now, they drift in listless foam;
Yes, I knew you—long ago.

Noon has lulled the apple trees
Till the droning bees are still
There upon the blossomed hill,—
I am tired of listless thinking,
I will sleep and dream awhile,
Deep in purple clover sinking,
I will sail the breezy seas—
I will live with you a while.

I have sailed these brine-cut seas,
Know them in their wild unrest,
Found their isles beyond the West,—
Lived and died with you, my sea-mates,
Sailed with you—but long ago,
Sung your love-songs, died your death-fates
In the stinging hail or breeze—
Perished with you long ago.

How we found that Western Land,
How we bound their men for slaves,
How we lay in brine-fresh graves—
Thro' the apple-trees is singing,
Was it then, or is it now?
Hark! the battle shout goes ringing
And I grasp a brother's hand—
Farewell then, and farewell now.

As I ponder o'er my book
 Low I hear the lazy bees
 Droning thro' the apple-trees;
Far away the kine are lowing
 And a hush falls over all;
Swift the heavens in sunset glowing
Fade in one remembered look—
 Oh my Soul—when was it all?

FLAME KINGS*

To J. L. B., June 26, 1914

Afar she stood and saw the Flame Kings pass,
Between her feet and theirs a chasm yawned;
Down whose unutterable void no star has dawned;
She would have followed one whose wistful face
Was almost turned to her, but knew his glance
Forbade, yet hoped; so, leaning from that Place,
Beneath, she saw a Sea of glowing glass,
And deemed the marvel not of barren Chance,
But some design of him, her flaming friend;
Lo, mirrored aeons adown a bleak abyss
She saw the pageant pass, those Kings ascend
Unnumbered ages; dimly dreaming, guessed
One meaning mind has ne'er expressed
In finite thought, or ever can; for this,
Not mine, is hers; envisioned with her mind
I write, who am no prophet; seek, and find.

Beating the ether on vibrant fire,
Steadily soaring, as dreams aspire
On spirit pinions with vision asheen
To pass the Dawn's unsurmountable hills
And gaze o'er a Valley unseen—
Float the Flame Kings, one by one,
Blazing their aureate way to a Sun
That is ultimate over all Kings—
Greater than all, save Sleep,

*This is an attempt to describe a dream which J. L. B. actually had. Some of the lines are from the dream itself; but, as usual in such cases, only a general memory of the whole survives the awakening. The title is a part of the dream. J. T.

Supreme over stars and souls,
First among ordered things,
Lord of the shoreless Deep
Whose sand shines through its shoals
As a shifting glitter of stars
For a veil to all vision's reach;
Mover of ageless tides
Over those world-strewn bars
Where shattered, the systems bleach
Heaping Infinity's grave—
Where the god of all dreams abides,
There denser midnight stills
All rays than throbs to their beams,
So a clamour of silence fills
Black space with the ghosts of dreams;
Up to this Sun they wave,
Flame Kings, one by one,
And the sway of their wending fills
The crystalline void with a choral sound,
So a rushing of utterance rings around
The listening stars in their last profound,—
Sweeping an infinite lyre
With the chords of a universe, thundering songs
Of love begotten on blackened hate,
Of life on nothingness, rousing throngs
Of slumberous clouds to know desire—
To look with might on unfathered space,
To woo the night and beget a race
Who shall conquer Chaos and bring forth Fate,
Eternity's semblance, cast
As a shadow of One loomed vast
On awful abysses unshunned
Down chasms no Flame may cleave,
Or its fanning reverberate
To the likeness of wonder stunned

As a Dawn arisen in hell
Where somberly, oceans heave
Their sooty billows aswell
Under the blackness of light unborn
That never shall startle a dreaming Morn;—
Fate, in that Sun's keen rays
Foreshadowing One on all days
Round the uttermost ether's rim
Where the shades of dreams go not,
And Flame Kings fade, forgot
In the splendour of Him.

She saw the Flame Kings down a living vision,
Followed one, and touched his garment's hem,
Flashed with him above the shoreless Deep
Whereon his burning brothers moved serene
Beyond all firmaments afire with them:
Starkly straight as Morning's primal ray
That cleaves the Eastern hills from clinging night,
A solitary beam shot past her sight,—
A shaft of adamantine light, but black,
And sharp as two-edged death, whose upper blade
Shears life from man, the nether, severing
His mind from time; there, glancing swiftly back,
She saw the beam congealed to harder shade,
Beheld a whirling sword whose sharp decision
Warred upon the Flame of every King—
Cleft their elemental fires in twain;
The duller dross was shed a jewelled rain
Adown the empty ether, vanishing
In brittle tinkling dews where one uncrowned
His head majestical as light, unwound
The involuted fire that bound his zone,
And flung his changing robe of splendid flame—
A shower of broken red and flawless green,
Of emeralds and rubies, down the night;

So all, save one, who kept the dross his own,
Unawed by any Sun's eternal Name,
Acknowledging above his reign no might
Save time alone; so all, save one proud hue,—
From amethyst, and sapphires' midnight blue,
Through sultry topazes whose sullen stain
Was molten gold, to that pure queen of gems
Unspoiled by any opalescent sheen,—
Commingled, blazing swiftly down
When vassal Flame-Kings hurled their diadems
Upon the Deep: one King gave not his crown,
His Flame impure toiled on, the sword
An instant paused, then passed; he owned no Lord.

Unloosened all their dingy dross,
(Save only one, unblest by loss),
Ethereally lightened, leaps their pace,
Where upward rushing stream the Kings
Of Flame athwart the dusky face
Subdued by jewels, of under-space,—
The deeply glowing ether, core
Aflame, though crimsonly concealed
Beneath inert unmelting hail
Of rubies, mountain-massed, the shed
Unflowing robes of soaring Kings
Who go to find a face revealed
Behind a whiter fire. No red
Yet tinct with mortal blood
May dull that flaming countenance,
Nor green of emeralds avail
To temper splendour with amaze
For eyes immortal strangely wed
To perfect light; the sapphire glows
With no deep night's refracted ray

Before the fires of final Day
Intolerably pure and keen—
Translucent as the heart of Light,
Ashamed, she shines a flawless white;
Transpierced by finer fire, the green
Of emeralds, dissolving, clears
To sheerest crystal colourless;
Thus chastened, when the Day appears
Serene above Death's wilderness
A misty veil before the face
Of that lone Sun outlasting time
Alone, no jewel's ray may change
Unshatterable excellence
To aught less unified, less pure;
As queenly rubies fell, so all;
No lesser radiances endure,
Weak princelings get them thence;
The smoke-beclouded topaz shows
No golden soil or amber stain
Invisible in light sublime
Outblazing colours; offering vain
Their evening stillness, slowly pale
The gentle amethysts to rain
Of dewy scintillance, ashine
Their starry tenderness as His,
The Sun above all stars divine—
The lonely Star who ever Is.

She followed now across the starless places,
Saw the wonder of their glances brighten
Over silent voids and windy spaces
Hollowed to the breath of time's elation,
Life; beheld their pinions slowly lighten,
Followed up the Dawn, and heard them pouring
Forth their souls in one oblation,

Saw the Day-tide ever nearer rushing
Kindle all their eyes to light's adoring,—
Heard a praise magnificent, and saw them
One by one bow down and shield their faces;
Then the full Day broke, a sudden flushing
Drenched their bended Flames with time's last
wonder—

Fire made absolute might overawe them
Only less divine, the Flame Kings; nearer,
Stern moved the Day and smote asunder
Self from Flame; the Kings arose, they hastened
Ever swifter on, nor glanced behind them
Where she panting followed; would they hear her?
Must that Sun's intolerance not blind them?
Soared the Kings unshaded,—they were chastened;
Face averted, still she laboured slowly
Up the ultimate she might not gaze upon,
Unfearful she, one glance had blessed her holy
Before that universal shrine, as ever on
With praise in tongues unknown the free Flames
fared,

Untranslatable to mortal words their song
She strove in vain to murmur; eagerly
She pressed to touch her friend's immortal plume
Or dazzling feet,—would he but stay!

Had she but dared,
Who knows, she had not died, but breathed to sing
Unutterable things past death's remembering;
Alas! she feared to soil his light with earthly clay.

Had she but dared!
Go, bolder soul, attune
Thine inner ear to Sleep,
Not thou shalt weep;
It was no tomb

Her humble spirit shunned,
Unread the fatal rune
Inhewn on living rock:

It was no doom
Of truth, and so, to be,
That song should fall forgot
Down emptiness.

She hailed him not,
Her faith's great weariness
O'ercame her eager lips—
Withheld the finger tips

Put forth to plead;
Perchance he would not heed?
Alas! that hope despaired
To touch those wings unsunned

By mortal stars;
What though he made a mock
Of praying dreams, a jest
On fair humility,—
A scorn for those who seek,
And finding rest,

Repine,—
Then had she shone
(Though ever meek)
With Flame twice great as he,
His seeming radiance known
But embers of the fire divine
Unbreathed upon by God,
His jewel a dingy stone,
His wings but common sod
And worthiness a dream.
But he was none of this,
His Flame was purified;
So had his spirit kiss
Touched fire upon her brow,

Beatified
Her lowliness
And lit her lips with prophecy;
His mind's caress
Had burned her pure as he
Is clean above all earthiness,
Had she but dared.

Night and her reticent eyes are won!
Chaos no more is her temple's fane;
Her dusky hair is a molten gold
Where she walks on eternal hills
Abloom with flowers of the uttermost Sun
Whose Dawn, as a coral rain
Sways over valleys, fold on fold,—
Wind upon wind, awakening, fills
The azure with fire, the ether with song,
For chaos is conquered, his iron undone,
The Doors of that hidden tomb unsealed
Where Day has slumbered for aeons and aeons,
So his dreamful eyes behold the Sun
Remembered, but unrevealed
Through exiled ages in Death's grim Land:
Whose are the victory's paeans
Swelling the Morning's freshening gale
Where it sweeps along
Ethereal meads as a veering ship
Cleaving with light the crystalline main,—
Furrowing nothingness into spray
Of clustering stars and worlds flung free
Asparkle in risen Day:

Hail ye Flame-Kings, hail!
Thine is the song
Trembling Eternity's lip

With Fate's ineffable, still refrain;
Thine is the Dawn on that Sea
Where life swept dreams away
And the shadow of One was cast
As an image of all to be:
Kings of the Living Mind,
Thine be all praise;
Eternal, though changed, ye soar
Over years and the tomb of Time,
Refined in Truth's white Fire,
Free of the tears we keep,—
Free of all years, ye mount
Up to thy Sun sublime
And the Perished Dawns respire
In the wind of thy wonderful ways;
Up to that Sun ye stream,—
Tongues of Eternity's dream
Heard in our transient sleep
Here on the echoing shore
Of waters remembering Dawn.

Such praise she sang down Morn's ambrosial air,
Her friend, with long remembrance down his eyes
Turned back an instant, sanctified her there,
A priestess of the lonely Sun supreme
Above all galaxies and mortal skies:
Where others gaze on night beholding nought
Save random stars or distant mistiness
Of hoary suns, her mind had dared to dream
A vaster universe unseen, yet real,
Within, beyond the vacant wilderness
Of naked space; till ever rolling thought
Evolving slowly shadowlike from thence,
Assumed corporeal form, and fire was born;
As fire alone may purest fire refine,

From fire there came forth flame, from flame
In ordered sequence, Kings arose divine
Above all lesser fires: her reverence
For their sublimer majesties o'ercame
All fear, so she went singing down the Morn,
Their prophetess.

In final Day she stands;
The Flame Kings' pilgrimage is all but done;
She may no nearer go, but stays afar
Reluctantly her feet that seek the Sun
As they, her rulers: there, with idle hands
Enclasped, though not in hope, must she abide
While ever on they fare to greet their Star,
Their undiminished fount through flaming years
By heedless praise unchilled, or vainer prayer:
How gladly had she gone, a Flame-King's bride!

There is a Sea undreamed that each must cross
On feet not made of earth, whose brackish tears
Bewail the bitterness of every loss
The clinging clay shall mourn, if he would fare
Beyond the Dawn to Day's untravelled Land
And know the Sun whose light is everywhere,
Unseen, all-seeing; here, upon the shore
Of that remembering water, awed, we wait;
The venture beckons us with airy hand,
Though Dawn delay and longed-for Night be late,
Yet some shall cross at last and mourn no more.

A priestess of the Flame Kings, earthly yet,
She has not trod that Sea her eyes forget
With mortal light; 'tis thus she stands alone,—
While on they flame,—without the holier zone

Of fire celestial: let her dream, and sing
Through me her distant vision's lesser thing.

What Flame's empurpled arrogance has dared
To flicker on full clad, all unashamed,
His hidden heart's divinity unbared?
His jewelled crown shows dull as dusty glass,
The robe that once was fire is sooty smoke;
Alone he reigns, whose boastful tongue disclaimed
All truth, void night his realm; he shall not rule
An equal kingdom with his brothers:

“Fall

Forever down to Truth, thy hell, vain fool;
Be quenched in fires thy lying life awoke
To ever fiercer flame: so perish all
Who desecrate with lust of gain the spark
Divine I gave with life: Die thou; Be Dark.”

Calm as Dawn the awful doom
Flashes stark upon the King,
Sears the brow with one immortal Name
Rash pride would never own;
No word spoken; felt alone
That silent severance of Flame
From Light omnipotent:
Suddenly a blinding gloom
Strikes the Eyes of Day to stone,
Stays that radiant soaring band,
Chills the flaming praise they sing:
Instantly all motion dies,
The Sun has hurled his final Dart—
“Blaspheming Light, be thou apart”;
Swift as fire athwart dead space,
Tipt with death its keen beam flies,
Pierces through each Flame King's heart,

Changes not one living face;
Still as yesterdays they stand
Frozen into iron might
Dazzling tongues all crystal bright
As fallen dews on asphodel,
Save one, that glisters hard and black—
An adamantine jewel of hell.

Then down dead night a meteor track
Of arrow blackness lives and lies,—
Extinct the black, its brilliance dead:
The life of that false King is rendered back
To death who breathed and hell who bred
Its infamy.

 This death his first:
The very ash of him shall die,
His charred-out Flame shall sink accursed,
Be blasted down to utter nothingness.
Within that Sun's relentless core:
No later Flame shall leap to bless
His memory: his name shall live no more.

For lo! sheer up the stricken Day he speeds,
A streak of motion where all else is still;
All movement save his own holds back its breath;
Swifter, swifter, swifter up his flight—
No dream of death e'er sped so swift as he
Where stark toward the Star of Stars he streams;
Black as death he ever blacker burns,
Chars to crisper cinders Daytide's wrack;
Starting silently, he stirs the seeming Night
Whose ebon crystal stands outbrazening brass,
By quick degrees to whisper as if reeds
Were rustled in a rising breeze; shrill
As whistling arrows tipt with sharpened glass,

That strive up wintry winds a lessening death,
The whisper swells to shrieks of misery
So keen his ever swifter flight, till screams
Of piercing terror startle space to learn
This once that Sun of Suns' Immortal Name
He yells in death: the Star of Stars goes black,
Extinct its light an instant, night is drenched
With pent-up floods of death; in seething flame
That False King's blackened travesty is quenched.

Sheer down the Sun's immortal Fire he pierced,
Annihilated there he found his hell.

The horror of it strikes her blind;
She prays within:
"Immortal Mind,
Only thou art pitiless;
Grant my blindness tears to bless
His memory and blot his end;
Who knows, he might have been my friend."

"This joy be thine;
Let Mercy's tender dew
Unseal thine eyes,
Beholding, after mortal kind
Some good in him."

Her plea is answered: human tears
Refreshing what was once divine
Rain down the parchèd years;
Their crystal scatters heavenly hues—
His memory's radiance long foredone—
O'er many a wearied mind:
Immortally the final Sun

Is Lord of all our fleeting skies,
Though pity's drops bedim
Light only less sublime than His,
Should men bewail
His changeless Face unseen
Behind our ever-varying veil
Of sorrow's rain and Him?
The rain shall cease; He ever is.

Once more shines forth eternal Day,
With darkness passed that King away
A dream from unremembering life:
Upward throng the Flame Kings, freed
Their host of all discordant strife;
While yet his blasphemy had tongue,
Their praises were a lyre unstrung,
Their harmony a rifted reed,
And melodies unrhythmed jars
Of tuneless dissonance; but now,
As free on rushing fire they climb,
Their perfect music stays the stars
In distant ravishment, foretells
Harmonious years of bright increase
To ever purer light, and swells
A pealing anthem up to Time,
Who pausing, smooths his rugged brow
And smiles in peace.

What mysteries she learned, their Prophetess!
Though one return from dream, his labouring mind
May never overtake the weariness
Who leads him dayward back, or following, find
Those magic portals his own soul designed
A gateway into paradise; so she,
Reluctantly returning thence, may sing

No rounded song of wide-eyed prophecies,
Nor may a mortal's hands unbidden bring
Celestial fire to men.

I dimly see
Through her enkindled eyes, infinities
Of all-containing wisdom, half-concealed
Through misty revelation, half-divine
With reason's perfect clarities ashine;
Gaze,—her vision distantly revealed:

As dreams who have breathed the spirit of fire
Outspeed all light on their wonder's quest,
So the Kings flash on in their Sun's behest
Filled with the Day their Flames inspire:
As with life-giving wine a god might drink
Till his echoing laughter arouses the storms,
Their spirits are kindled at fire supreme
Over death's forever unnumbered forms:
Unvisioned the Flame Kings' ultimate state,
Their Prophetess gazes beyond all years—
Divining the Dawn from a hint of Morn,
Where, ages above all Night, appears
Ineffably calm as the face of Fate,
A gleaming mist of light unborn;
Smiting the Deep with reverberant flame
Down all ages invisibly stream
Their changing majesties, draping our skies
With auroral splendors moving like Sleep
A drowsy wonder over the air;
And some shall stir in a dim surmise
Of the Dawn unseen,—awaken, to sink
Beneath those Waters their hopes long passed,—
Find the Day imagined there
Still and perfect, calm at last.

Wheeling forever around their Sun,
Grazing its fire with their circling spheres
Perfected in flame, their soaring done,
Eternally move the Kings round ways
Whose orb ordained forever nears
The symmetries of a Fire they graze:

All Flames approximate
Through ever-varying form,
Through death and shadowed fate
To one unchanging norm,—
One awe but dimly guessed,
One Mind e'er unexpressed
Through thought's pervading might,—
Made manifest
In number's symphonies
Where thought with being mates;
Though ordered aeons transform
Void chaos into law,
But Flames may feel the awe
Eternity creates:

Their endless orbits weave
For everlasting Night
A splendid robe of light;
So clothed in harmonies
All star and wonder-wrought,
Her form transcending thought
That Flames alone perceive,
Unseen of mortal minds,
Night looms before the Sun;
Her flaming splendour blinds
Our eyes before the Day—
Whose Sun we shall not know:
Her robe alone we see,

And watch its flaming flow
Down black infinity:

From Time's eternal loom
It falls forever, spun
With warp of aeons to be
And woof of ageless doom:
Through all its patterns run
The wonders of the Sun—
The hues of hope and dread,
Pale hate, and love's despair
Meet, interwoven there,
The night's immensity
That frights the timid dead
Through all, the darkest thread:
Forever spun, it falls
And floats o'er years to be,
A robe of warmth and light
Where systems blindly stir—
Unborn in primal night,
Enshrouds all aeons that were
In death's chill mystery:

Its smallest part sublime,
No mortal's mind has read
That pattern's grand design;
One thread of it appeals
The following mind to know
Through fate and deeds undone;
Majestically slow
Through man-outlasting time,
With many a secret sign
Its meanings intertwine,
So marvels move in vain:
To man, who wove it not

It seems a tangled skein,—
Unravel it who can,
The single thread will show
The whole of God to man—
Reveal each hidden plan
And make the pattern plain.

She stood afar and saw the Flame Kings weave
Unsymboled mysteries of light divine,
Sublime beyond all utterance; alas!
That she, returning thence must ever leave
The pattern unrevealed; no feet may pass
Beyond the Borderland to us: shall we repine,
Who have her prophecy? Let us resign
Our souls to Time; the words are hers, not mine.

NEWTON

Slowly moves wide wheel on wider wheel,
Grinding gradual time-outlasting grain—
System-dust, and finer stuff for brain
Aeon-born to bid the stars reveal
Their reaping: as from light the minds congeal
About the transient atoms,—melt again
Impalpable as thought in death's inane;
Not yet is mind and matter's union real.

Incarnate springs man's archetype, the end
Of age on adamant age revolved:
One awful thought informs the slow decay
Of heaven on heaven, till their last wonders blend
In Newton: motion, time's grim mill resolved
By him, shall never wear his light away.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Inspired of Time's unuttered harmonies,
Deep knower of the soul unknown to men,
Forshadower of larger life again,
Unfallen, grander thro' humanities
Beyond the clay; supreme in sound
And symbolled mysteries, lone thou hast found
One hidden chord that shall attune the spheres—
To drown their chaos thundered harsh in fears
With melodies subdued, to presage powers
Undreamed thro' all man's paltry, treasured hours
Of moment's inspiration: seek we light
From thee enthroned in solitary might.

Eternal, solemn, free, thy music peals
Uncloyed by empty Beauty's languid voice
Ethereally false: thy fugues rejoice
In myriad prophecies, whose chant reveals
Responsive harmonies, till sound unfolds
In rolling splendor like to God who holds
A vortex universe in mind of one;
Return they ever round thy central sun
Of theme—grand emblems of eternity
Enrolling all within their tide, whilst we
But wonder at the hidden rhythm's beat
Within the rhythm, strong, all pure, all sweet.

Could Orpheus' plaintive song of love endure,
Or would the trees and streams recall those pure
Delights he sang? Alas—one is forgot,
For song and singer strayed where song is not,
That idle passion be forever sure
Of silence; but, let herb and flesh and stone

Forever perish, then wilt thou alone
Peal out a deathless concord, bonding spheres
And systems shadowed in thy vaster scheme
Of death: not thine is change, till all the years
Of time's reluctant aeons read thy dream,
That when their sleep-forgotten dawn appears
In these remembered skies with sudden light,
The shattered heaven shall hear the deathless word
Thy music speaks: still voice of stiller night—
O prophet of all things,—we have but heard
Thy voice behind the sound, to comprehend
It not, until thy endless music end.

JAMES CLERK MAXWELL

1831-1879

Maxwell! fame to make old Scotland proud,
Sheer genius crystallized in Time and Space,
Your single mind would glorify a race
Tho' Burns we lacked an a's unminted gowd;
True Poet you, outsingin' a' their crowd
Wi' wee sma' pipin's, Nature showed her face
To them,—but you, her Heart, and bade you
trace
One boundless life through lightning, fire and cloud.

Discerning Order where all seemed mad Chance,
You gave the clashing Atoms laws, as Fate
Immutable; Musician too, with might
You swept the Threefold Nabla, till elate
Through harmony, you flashed on Night one glance,
From smitten chaos gushed eternal Light.

A KING

"I was: I loved: I am not;" only these
The words one wished for epitaph. He fought
His valiant fight, and fell; a friend unsought
Befouled this flawless memory:—"The lees
Of bitter doubt he drained, choked off disease
And unbelief at last, denied he taught
Against our scriptures: evil thus unwrought,
He died a zealot full of psalmodes."

So perish all who strive to free their kind
From brainless Custom's brazen tyranny.
Fight on! devoted band, the human mind
Through truth shall yet prevail, and reason
saves:
Be crowned with thorny life, as even he,
Kings of men though swine defile your graves.

WILLIAM THOMSON

LORD KELVIN

1824-1907*

High on the splendid roll of Britain's fame,
Fused in the very Ether's pulsing core,
Large as the marvels Science ever bore,
Writ in blazing letters, lives one name,—
William Thomson, Intellect's white flame.
Out from Eternity he strode; before
His mind Disorder's mountains loomed no
more,—
From unimaginable heights he came.

Into the Dark he passed, and Midnight fled
Young as the Dawn down Heaven's Milky
Ways:
In death, as life, still faithful to his trust
With Man he lingers, none of him is dead.
And how has Britain sung her loftiest praise?—
His dust is mingling now with Newton's dust.

*These are the only words on his grave, where he
lies in Westminster Abbey, beside Newton.

FATA MORGANA

In light of opal wonder
Beyond the Pleiades,
A spirit wanders lonely
With stricken face and gray;
She shines for dead men only
To haunt their haggard trees,
And rends all veils asunder
In shadowings of Day.

Her face is ever burning,
Unbeautifully seared
With furrows wrought by Godhead
In purposing of Time;
But Man is ever mislead
By signs his forbears feared,
And dreams of any turning
From Death alone sublime.

In void of timeless aether
She sails alone, unknown,
Uncharted o'er the vastness
Of Silence without shore;
She mourns in dead outcastness,
A barrenness of stone—
For heaven sunk far beneath her,
Unloved forevermore.

The starry heroes' pæans
That shake eternal seas,
Grow dumb as waiting hill-snows,
When vaster than the Spheres
Her awful silence echoes

Unsymboled harmonies,
Whose chords crash on for æons.
And beats, a thousand years.

Alone she knew the secret
Of every planet's love,
Their every fiery passion
Ere Hell was scarce begun;
But what tho' Chaos crash on,
All cold she stands above
The dim, forgotten, far-set
Dominions of the Sun.

She casts a pale ensnaring
By treachery of reeds,
When some have seen her beckon
Their souls across the Dark;
But few may ever reck on
The deathful dance she leads—
Men pay for godlike daring
With bodies grimly stark.

And vainly some have striven
To find her light again,
Yet only gods have known her
In deathlessness of youth;
And they are ever sadder
Than all the sons of men,
For them the clouds are riven
And they beheld the Truth.

Altho' the Prophets teach her
In creeds of Better Things,
And many Christs have perished
In babbling of her name,

Yet every truth they cherished
Has loosed its waxen wings—
No change can ever reach her
Eternally the Same.

And some have promised ages
In knowledge of all things,
And some have lied a ceasing
From knowing of all kind;
But still a vast increasing,
Undying Silence rings
And throbs thro' pulsing ages—
A mockery of mind.

If any man has dreamed her,
His sleep was tinged with death:
Unveiled she will be never,
Her being none may tell:
In life we seek her ever,
And cease from weary breath
To know we never gleamed her
Who lights not heaven nor hell.

SEEKING

ON

Down the River of Light,
Swift through the meadows of Day,
On, in the Night's despite—
On, and away!

Touch not a nodding grass,
Stay not for any flower,
Stealthy as winds we pass—
Fleet as the breath of an hour.

Out to the Ocean at last,—
Out where all winds go free;
Seeker,—the Bar is passed,
The Bar and the blossoming lea.

Down the Ocean to Night,
Heed not the Siren's lay—
On, in the Sun's delight,
On, and away!

SEEK; FIND

Despise this curious globe inwrought with gold;
Contemn the wind's untravelled wonderland;
Shun mazy night's consistencies unplanned;
Let not our meadow's yellow flowers unfold,
Or rot afresh in mouths of wormy mould;
Transmute the stubborn atoms, aye, command
New elements to glow beneath thy hand:
Neglect, perform, the End is yet untold.

Not earth or dusty stars may answer thee,
Or grim death break thee on a living wheel;
No fiend shall nourish hate on hope unsought:
One part contains the whole,—alone goes free,
All else an idol, whose blind eyes reveal
Behind gray dreams of God thine own high
thought.

FLEETER THAN TIME

Who shall outspeed the flight of a year
Who is swifter than light,
Who will be Home when the Dawns appear
Innocent in God's sight?

Up shall they wing from East and West
And the mountains under the sea—
They will arise from their years' unrest
To sink in infinity.

With the speed of days shall the years suspire,—
Who is swift as their wingless feet?
Fleeter his wings whose soul would aspire
To halt the flight of the hours most fleet.

Lo! thou swifter than Godlike Light,
Hail! bright Messenger age-long sought;
Thou shalt outstrip the Day and the Night
Fleeter than Time, O Thought!

ASLEEP

O Men! Eternity's forgetful heirs
What starrier deeps unfathomed have ye known?
How mournfully thy shallow oceans moan
An echoed thunder that was never theirs:

One dull oblivion rolls by day despairs
Athwart the wondrous heavens, a rack of stone
Around unbounded waters; these alone
Bar memory from Earth's unanswered prayers.

All spirit fires are in thy mortal reach;
A Sun once loved shall never disappear
From visioned skies, their dawns forever near;

Then vaster hope may humble life beseech?—
Afar, Sleep wakefully wandering may hear
Infinity o'ersurge the dreaming Beach.

PURE LIGHT

Opinion's various multicoloured Glass
Between men's minds and Him, the Changeless
One,—
Defiles the changing light and dims the Sun
We gaze upon as fashions come, and pass.

Those brightened colours cheat man's pensive eye
Till every page of years or Nature glows
With more than suns; a rose no more is Rose,
And on her cheek rich sunsets never die:

Is all that perished ever, dead in vain,
Must Yesterday forever haunt Today
That light be never white, but gray,
Or Morning tinged with Evening's brighter stain?

We stand before the Glass, what shines Behind?
Who first discerns must take for thought his own,
Forgetting all, must he fare forth alone
And meet the Matchless Master Mind to Mind.

THE MESSENGER

Hold the flaming torch unshaken,
Touch the years on feet of fire,
Down all aisles of dark desire
Let thy Dawn awaken.

Kindle space in one keen glance,
Smile, and ordered systems brighten
Round those shores where huge wrecks whiten—
Quicken with the wind of chance.

Pass those titan suns assembled
There to spoil thine ageless light;
Fire thy birthright, Time's thy might
Ere ever Ether trembled.

Spun of light, ablaze with dreams
Let thy hair stream o'er the aeons,
Sounding stars to deathless paeans
Where the stillest cluster gleams.

Glance a moment's flight behind thee:
All thine aureate glories quenched,
Flame and hair in darkness drenched,
Let the dead Night blind thee.

THE DESIGNER

Grown old, he laboured at his task unknown,
No eye beheld that ageless hand outlinn
The firmament, and no mind compassed him
Who first imagined heaven a mystic zone
Of starry meaning; darkened ages flown
Down empty misery shall not bedim
His mind, who mocked the radiant seraphim
And made their constellated eyes his own.

Unravel thou the woven Zodiac
Who wouldst reveal that worker's wondrous
dream;
What marvels then, fine-spun as primal thought
May thread the ages, lead thee humbled back
To God, no wisdom tells; though death it seem—
Unweave!—with life is mystery unwrought.

"ANCIENT OF DAYS"

Old beyond all count of uttered years,
Immovably stare those iron eyes
Through every idol man reveres,
And see the dust; to Him no altars rise.

Eternity is but a whim of man,
The Ancient knows, all days to Him are one;
No day of years since numbered days began
Is aught for Him but 'Now';—begun, 'tis done.

Where broods this Ancient, solitary, grim
In timelessness, what awful aspect His?
In thy unbounded mind behold thou Him,—
A mind that ever was and shall be, is.

THE JEWEL

Flawless, calm, it glows,
Imperishably wrought
To perfect symmetries
He only knows
Who fashioned it serene
Through shaping mysteries
With all his soul asheen
To peerless thought.

All rays give up their gold
Their swifter silver shed
Within those crystal deeps
Where hues unfold
Their woven splendor spun
In dreams outblazing Sleep's,
Their colors mingled, one
In beauty wed.

Transmuted clarities
Thence issue newly strange;
Unequal beams unite
Disparities
In wonder's pure increase;
There throbs the heart of Light—
Its maker's masterpiece—
The soul of Change.

THE SEEKER

Bring no laurel branches hither,
Weave no wreath that shall not wither,
Raise no pillared pomp to him;
He is dead:
Truth he saw with eyes grown dim,
Saw her lips move, strove to hear her,
Closer crept and saw Death near her,—
Heard her speak;
Back he turned, his eyes a glory,
He would tell the Ages' story—
Hers the praise!
Little recked he then of fame,
Purified in life's white flame—
He beheld her face to face,

What were man's immortal bays?
Leave him lonely in this place
Where his light went out for aye;
Here were ghostly finger tips
Laid upon his eager lips—
She passed by;
Halted here her Fellow grim—
His the stilly hand
Chilling wondrous words unsoken;—
Truth had left our hope a token
Had she willed:
Scorning us she loved the Seeker,
Humble we, but he was meeker
Loving her alone.
Cover up his life all broken,
Unfulfilled;
What he found is yet unknown,
Yet unsaid:
Come, let us go—
Quit this place, as even She
With no remembrance; he
Would have it so.

POSTERITY

"Let this imperfect be,
A Thing of Destiny—
Time's younger child;
Whatever good betide
Let this pure hope abide
All unreveiled.

If this be spit upon,
Its crown of bays but thorn
When I am gone,

Take then for heart a stone,
Depart, and dwell alone
Without my scorn."

Thus wrote the ancient seer.
They put his hope to shame—
Dishonoured her.
"Take arms! and shield her fame!"
How bravely did they jeer!
He could not stir.

VOICES

Aeons and aeons of Voices, weary
Through age upon age of tears
Shuddering under the Night,
Darkening prophecies, dreary
As emptiness born of delight;
When will their sobbing cease?
These are the sounding Years
Echoing back to peace.

Crowding the ebon stillness, vaulted
With heavens of iron above,
Flitting abysmal glooms
Where high Death towers exalted
Over his vassal Dooms—
Struggle the homeless hosts
Crowned with remembering love,—
Forsakenly flutter the ghosts.

One Voice is solemnly pealing,
Over all moaning it rings,
Authority's dominance this,
The word of its mournful revealing?—

"Hearken, ye shadows of bliss,
Who wantoned on Life's hot Wine,
Gray spectres of slaves and Kings,
The Draught ye crave is mine:

For want of my Water ye languish,
'The Wine was Fire,' ye weep;
Shall I cry an end to thy thirst,
Or Time put a term to thine anguish?
More deeply am I accursed,
For a drop of thy Wine I would give
The whole of Oblivion's Deep,
So changed, I might die, and live."

Unanswered as summer's thunder
Boasting to fright the sun,
Eternity's utterance dies:
Silence, a rarer wonder
Smites the adamant skies,
Sears a command unsaid;—
"When Water and Wine are one
Shall Death be King of the Dead."

THE SUBLIME

Islands of stars in the infinite Deep,
Foam as a universe blown on the night,
Eddying ethers that wheel into being
All on one solemn majestic sweep

Of the pinions of light,
Gathering might in their mystical motion
Round the dominions of God's decreeing,—
Float as mere spume on a fathomless ocean
Unsounded by space, unbounded in time:
The lift of those wings is a symphony rolled
Under stars as dust in the vibrant void,
And their fall is a fanning of music sublime—
Beating to atoms all motes destroyed,
So the infinite ocean is foamless and pure—
For ages these hushes of darkness endure,—

Till the wings once more
An aeon from under all nothingness, lift
With vortex whirl on the brooded shore,
Islands and foam in a spinning drift;
And the pause of those pinions ere they descend
Is eternity save to One alone,
For the ruined worlds round reeling suns
But wail an echo the waters have known,
And the stars are dark in their fiercest flame—
Their wars extinct, their endings told,
Their harmonies only a dream-heard song
Forgotten with dawn, remembered with sleep
Ere ever they woke or time had an end:
Once more the fall of all motion stuns
The foam to dust, and the glittering throng
Of motes to nothingness whence all came;
So ever those makers of melody chime—
Rise and fall in a timeless rhyme,—

Being to void, note by note,
 Void to being remembering naught,
 All unheard but in God's one mind
 That wills all motion, that thinks each mote,
 That lifts the pinions of life o'er death,
 That speeds all death on the wings of thought:
 Change outlasted by Him alone,
 The dust may dream but a note of the song
 That is heard by Him forever and ever;
 Though the dream of the Stars outlast the night,
 And the foam remember its natal tide,
 Though in seeming of more than ethereal might
 The eddyings atoms whirl and abide
 In the infinite Deep,
 Though the chorusing galaxies march along
 The chasms of space their wars dis sever
 From light for æons,—
 Eternity's face is never revealed—
 Unseen 'neath the beat of descending wings,—
 Unheard is the song a universe sings,
 Unechoed that victory's pæans
 The red stars peal as they blacken and die:
 From One alone is Time not concealed,
 And only One whose wings brush by
 Untouched forever and ever;—
 One is the mystery vaster than all of them,—
 Pinions and foam, a galaxy's diadem
 Blazing its noon in the shadow of Night,—
 These but the shape of change, One is the soul,
 Finite the universe, One is the whole;
 Maker of mind and its infinite light,
 Comprehensible never,
 One is sublime—
 Time!

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

A Valley sleeps beyond the Western Sea
And storied Isles of Dream, a glade of peace,
There Life is but a fading memory
Where hungry Death can reap no rich increase.

No sombre vale of brooding Night is this,
Here, azure morning ever stills the air,
No dreaming Dawn awaits the kindling kiss
Of some long-errant Sun to make her fair:

A pearly sheen of changing heavens instills
Immortal hope for larger Day, unborn
To all the Valley, save those fearless hills
That reach like gods above the mystic Morn

To rend out secrets from the cryptic Sky
Unstarred,—deep sunk beyond those chasms
Night
Reveals a breathing-span, then, thundering by
Imperial, o'erwhelms in hosts of light.

But should the giant Hills prevail o'er Day
To hurl him down, or yield the Stars to Morn,
The Valley Dwellers still shall go their way,
For Beauty lives to put their fears to scorn:

The rolling meadows shine with daffodils,
And all the brooks with ruddy marigolds,
Till hyacinths, empurpling shadowy hills
Expire, where every tender bud enfolds

Her petaled prayer of peace, that would not fade
But gently yield to noon the fragrant soul
In sighs,—a breath of incense loving-strayed
From life's last altar, white upon the knoll.

There drowse no browsing flocks; the plaintive
songs

Of birds are stilled o'er silent-swirling streams,
Swift-sinking to their tryst with billowy throngs
Where all forget their ripples' broken dreams.

There wandering lanes o'ergreen the meads, to lose
Their ways in breezy vales of rose and may,
And bower their shade where ever-early dews
Recall dead tears for some old yesterday.

No maiden waits her lover in those lanes,
Where never ecstasies of summer pale
At autumn's chill; no rustic lute complains
The broken tryst with low, unhappy wail.

No lover haunts the glens with broken sighs,
Or tramples down the patient corn, with quick,
Impatient step, to greet young April's eyes
With pleading hope, by some sweet smelling rick

Of autumn's clover: there, no soaring song
That thrilled the Harvest Home, must break
In anguished melody with winter's long,
Unlovely cry for loves that can forsake.

For there, the shades of earthly love forget
Their earthiness, and fear no breath of shame—
Late chill to penitence of vain regret—
Ah, There, Dishonor is an empty name.

These phantomed memories of men are not
Unloved, for they may never feel the keen
Unfriendliness of Death, alone, forgot
By loving ministry, in couches green

And white with fleeting pledge of grass and flowers,
Deflowered by some once loved and trusting hand
To ease the barren grief of bitter hours,
That love and hope, but never understand.

Not theirs the vanity in toys of life,
Or vainer crowns of death; they hoard no wreaths
Of deathless bay, or pictured scroll of strife
Long fought and done; and rust is in their
sheaths.

No flicker false as haunts the stagnant marsh,
No lying spark of God's forbidden fire
Enkindles men to die, and stare the harsh
Awakening after death of false desire.

None seek to beggar Miser Fame, that dust
Of charlatan defile the dust of seer,
And no ethereal love and loveless lust
Seem one in death,—desire dwells never here.

No wistful eye looks forth for sympathy,
Each wanders with himself in utter rest
From fearful hope and tearless misery
Forever; here the worst is as the best.

* * * * *

And if one wandering there a day, perchance
A year, or grayer centuries, may sigh
In thankfulness, then with an upward glance
Perceive the soundless war of hills and sky:

And like a wounded warrior, dream that he
Knew battles long ago, he yet may learn
That secret, nameless thro' Eternity,
And leave the Valley, never to return.

Then, if he choose to cast to Earth the years
Of happy, thoughtless peace, athirst to drink
The lasting draught, a clouded hand appears
To point the hidden slope to that last brink

Where grass and lilies halt reluctantly
Before the hard, forbidding sands, curved up
Like scimitars unsheathed relentlessly,
To guard the secret of the Master Cup.

Who treads the hidden slope must walk alone,
Unmoved by sudden hope or any fear,
He may not question air, or fire, or stone,
No answer give they, and no hope dwells here.

Unmoved, calm lilies wait for all who come,
Unmoved, the royal Iris lifts her head,
A prophetess, aye prophetess, but dumb,
Her latest word of hope fore'er unsaid.

There is no footprint on that barren rim,
For he who thirsts must throw all hope or dread
To Life: the subtle fire is all of him
That treads that slope, and all that wills to tread.

Thence rushingly the sweet and bitter flow
A mingled harmony of life and death;
A little span of peace, and all must go
In longing there, to blow with fluttering breath

Those eager ripples back: then plunging deep
The dusty lips, once drink, and all is done;
Save poppied meads of dreams, or hemlock sleep;
Grim Starless Night, or Life's resplendent Sun.

PERCHANCE

How many days of sheer content
May any mortal know;
Is there one moment yet unspent
To buy us aught but woe?

Uncertain all the squandered Past,
Its reckoning falls due;
Before a veil we pause aghast,—
It hides?—would God we knew.

All patterned with a gray design
Of seas and sand the veil;
Put forth a hand, all hope resign,—
Our trembling fingers fail.

So troubled here; Beyond, how fair!
Our fearful prayer is this—
Perchance there rests 'neath earth's despair
One second's flawless bliss.

ANOTHER DAY

INVITATION

Come up the little hill with me,
We'll take the Dawn by quick surprise,
We'll wake the winds all down the lea—
The birds on yonder tree,
And rouse the dragon-flies:

The dew yet slumbers on the vine
And sleep is on the violet's eyes;
Their revels done, the moths come home
And creep beneath their leaves:
Our joy of life is cool, keen wine,
The stilly air its crystal cup;
Come, climb the little hill with me
And see the first ray tip the sheaves
With golden grain: awake, come up!

WAITING

Far from the town
On the spring-green lane
Where the grass waves fresh—
Not young, but grown,
We'll see those Hills—clear Hills—our own;
Dust of our dust and flesh of our flesh—
We'll see you again when we lay us down.

What spoke the thrush,—
A croak for the town?
But the Hills are out there
Let us watch them till dark;
Let us wait till the sunset comes down with the
lark —

(He sings with the Sun till day brings him down);
We'll tarry,—sweet care!—
Till the hills' night-hush.

WEAVING

Irrevocably every dream
Takes wing with wakened Day;
Forever dies the transient gleam
Of Sleep's unearthly ray:
No risen Star may ever wake
Those dusky plumes
That night's dim Sun illumines,
Or stir ethereal deeps to shake
False light away.

Adown the night's forgotten tombs
Stalks one huge shape of gray,—
A spectre Day whose shadow looms
Immense on Light's affray;
Dull Ethers quell his ghostlier beam,
And Suns forsake
His wings as Dawns unmake
Sleep's mystery in wefts that seem
Time's interplay.

AT DAWN

Far, far away the silver city lay,
Far, so far beneath the morning hill
It was a dream,
And Dawn gazed everywhere, save there;
All round the sky a Day's wide wings hung still;—
The lower heaven shone one azure gleam,
Pure as a crystal dreaming summer air,
Clear and keen as the risen day.

Deep, deep beneath the Morning's gleaming brow
Eternal beauty glowed in godlike thought,
Unchangeably serene;
With sudden gust the freshened wind arose,
Awoke, and strove to speak, yet uttered nought;
Its chilly breath revealed no god unseen;
The jealous dawn concealed what lone night knows
The city dreamed, and suffers now.

TO THE WIND

Come, gently healing breeze from yonder hill,
Forget the yearning grass a breathing spell
And sigh but here! forsake the lily-bell,
Let every nodding violet dream thee still
A fragrance unreturning; whisper, fill
The dreary air with balmy peace, and tell
Our drooping blooms a tale of asphodel,—
Let them believe beneath thine airy will.

Blow once again thou ever-freshening wind;
Bring hither heaven's unbounded atmosphere
Those azure wings of hope's eternal year:
Unchained of life, by death still unconfined,
Forever free from any chilling fear,—
Touch thou with ghostly lips man's doubting mind.

THEN

Over the Desert and ever away
From Vales with their luring waters;
Up from the Meadows that smile, "Oh stay!
Rest, and be happy here!"

Beneath and afar the Cities of Men,
Unreal as the walls of a vision
Vanish in Air: shall we miss them then,
Lonely on yonder Peak?

Starrier dews shall freshen and bless
Our eyes, than brighter the meadows;
Then shall Dawns walk in loveliness
Over the Mountain Tops.

WINGS

There was fire in that western sky,
And a sky-deep sheen on the sand
As we watched the last gulls fly
To the sunset's brighter land;

Then the waves curled clear and green
And hue on hue paled fast,—
'Twas night, or the pause between
Two days when æons rush past.

An eternity stilled each crest,
No thunders crashed on the beach,
Would not those last wings rest
Within ken of our vision's reach?

Then rustled small waves at our feet
In floods of forgotten things,
Shall we see where all waters meet
Still visions of striving wings?

ONE PURE GIFT

Free-handed Life brought natal gifts to me,
Four precious things, all meet for gods, I ween:
A golden Casket holding Hope unseen;
An Emerald, clear green as April Sea,
Whose light was Youth shone purely, steadily;
A queenly Pearl, with softly-changing sheen,
Betokened Love, yea, all deep Love may mean;
And last, the Crystal Sphere of Memory.

Iron-fingered Death snatched sacrifice from me;
His whistling breath shrilled mercilessly keen,—
'Give up three things, one mayst thou keep between
My tempest's wintry poverty and thee.'
The Sphere I hid,—by it all else unclean
And vain; this visions all Eternity.

IN THE FIELDS

Far from those happier hills we roamed,
Deep in the Dawn beyond,
Under all night and sundered from day
Here let us lingering rest:—
Far from our beach where the long tides foamed—
Where white birds cleft the spray—
Rest, they are memories faintly fond
And the sky's wide fields are best.

Gaze in the crystalline depths of all light,—
Time is a jewel now;
Over all waters the lost wings shine
And their mystery weaves a spell
That only a ghost may learn aright,—
Hush, 'tis the voice we loved so well:
There flames a sun on your splendid brow
To kindle the star on mine.

THEY AND WE

Thy pallid land is but a shade
Ye happy things of Sleep,
Unreal, ye never seem to weep
Or dream the day afraid
To banish thee. What boy or maid
Among you knows that woe
Is not a dream: ye cannot weep,
Whose only sorrow is to know
Too much of joy, and reap
The kindnesses pure love can sow
Unsparingly: 'tis but a shade.

But they who haunt the starry glade
Waft us this message low:
O men unreal, why must ye weep—
Unhappy men, dismayed
By every changing wind, ye weep
False tears for hate to keep:
Though many sorrows come, they go
Forever, down the dusky deep
Unwept, if ye will have it so:
Thy land is but a pallid shade.

CRYSTAL VISION

Full opal sheen of ten soft-orbed moons
Broods whitely o'er yon Shadowland unknown
To wakefulness; beneath those clouds, lagunes
For salty leagues enshrine the seaward dunes
Where splendid night, empearled in misty zone,
Outshines on sand the sea; one light alone,
One soundless harmony of sound attunes
One crystal world of beams to flawless tone
Along that beach where never sound has flown—
Where, drowned in light the day forgotten swoons.

Behold! within the crystallised depths, a cloud,
A sooty dew steals dankly o'er the sea—
The soul of dissolution rends her shroud,
And two moons die; foul tempests howl aloud
Vast rage repressed through past eternity
O'er thundered waters, paused, as they would flee
Resounding hell with sky-lost crags downbowed
To blast the sea; the dead moons welter free
In grim twin wrack; black, all utterly
Destroyed, they mimic Death, as still, as proud.

Undimmed their splendors, eight moons glow serene,
All undismayed tho' sad; along the land
Huge shadows vaster grow, till shapes unseen
Ere ruin crashed, awake; these move between
Quick-quaking dunes and narrow foam-blown sand,
Majestically move to some command
Unheard when light was one; immense, unclean,
Their forms obsess the sand,—a moveless band,
Polluters, shadow-breeding; swart they stand,
Around their feet no blackened blade shall green.

Far athwart long-calm lagunes, awake
The new strange breezes, lift the light, and blow
Seaward to wond'ring waves,—from salty brake
Of rush and reed their whispered rustlings take—
To sigh their fresh brine breath caressing low
With laughs of little waves; the breezes know
What crests those land-locked waters longed to
shake

In wind-wide freedom round the surging flow
Of all the tides; the strange sighs wander slow
Across the lake they loved but to forsake.

With chilly breath a shuddered breeze creeps near
To pass the huddled bulks of crouching doom
Whose monstrous hideousness o'erflows the mere
Between the dunes and sea;—a whistle clear
And sharp as death sucked in,—the breeze's tomb
Is one vile giant's life;—he rips the womb
Of groaning Night, and staggering, strives to rear
His late-raped soul to heaven; his eyes presume
Creative Might, till, glaring through the gloom
He burns to life a brother's huger fear.

Their titan blacknesses blot out the main,
As leaping up, the godless brothers glare
Red mutual hate; can bonded birth restrain
That crimson murder rushing through each brain?
Gigantic sinews heave as down they tear
From skies outraged two startled moons; they swear
Destruction, hurl the moons and miss: again
They drag two moons from heaven's divine despair,
And headward heaving, strike; red brains, and hair
Stream tangled down the air in ghastly rain.

Tranquility is but an agèd dream
For all the sea, where hissing, sultry shrill
The two missed spherets sinking gleam
Their rapine through the rain; the waters teem
With writhing lives of death-begotten will
To breed and thrive; the dunes are starkly chill
Beneath huge discord wrought by fourfold beam—
The perfect harmony of ten is still
To wake no more, and murder broods his fill
Forgetful; light may die but not redeem.

Each lonely dune shines now a whitened mound,
A desolation; all the skies loom white
Their ghostliness, and slow decays confound
Fast-aging years; lone harmony is drowned
Down seas of chaos, throbbing through the night
Dull-pulsèd death; yet four moons leper-bright
As hope still tramp the heavens with doggèd round
Of everlasting ancientness, till light
Outliving time, expires, and all the sight
Of God is two moons dead,—his gaze refund.

Intolerably blackened glares each sphere—
Each orb of God that erstwhile hurled the fire
'Gainst crag and tree; now sightless, yet severe
The blackness withers down the new-sown year
To stubble, dulled all motion, stilled the choir
Of perfect soundlessness: may two aspire
Undaunted still, to hint those eyes a cheer
From moon-reflected dawns,—will He require
Their light? A flash,—the twain expire,
And down the aether blackness pierces clear.

Speak!—who on pinioned dreams of life would
soar,—

Have His eyes known all things and all life slain?

Ah, surely winds have died this night before—

Hark! rustling by, they whisper 'nevermore';

Is all the fear and pomp of death in vain—

The levelled dunes bring back the years again,

Their every shadow laves the dawns of yore

Where no bird utters now her searching plain

Along the cliffs and spray-forsaken main:—

Lone everlasting night entombs the shore.

THE TEMPLE STEPS*

There loomed a Dream at Slumber's lonelier Gate,
I live, and hold the vision of a dream
A shrine inviolate,—
Unshaken through the Ages' troubled thunder
No death shall rend my dream and soul asunder,—
I trod where suns by hoaried millions gleam
Like starlit sand around the Shore of Space;
Here dawned my deathless dream—
In regions all-transcending human wonder,—
Was't but a vision,—sinks that awful Place
In Time, in Space, akin to God or Fate
Or Either's unseen Face?
Eternal as the worm that dieth never,
Outflaming Milky Ways that flame forever—
Through Gods it visioned forth a vaster State,
Create in Thought, who mingles all, begot
Alone, without a Mate;
No god shall ever dream and mind dissever.

Eternity was but a flowerful Plot
Whereon I knelt,—the Ether, distant haze,
And Space, a vale forgot;
The pillared firmament showed shallow-founded,—
An atom circumscribed and death-surrounded;
Unsunned, Immensity's immortal rays
Pulsed swiftly through the star-dust, throbs of Time
Whose æons died,—but days
Upon that Place no Age has ever bounded:
'Twas not the Heart of Light, white fire sublime,

*(Some may be interested in knowing that this is an attempt to describe a dream of extraordinary vividness which the writer has had four times at intervals separated by from one to ten years.)

Enkindling Chaos, twinkling clouds of suns
Like midnight's wintry rime;
'Twas keener life than creeps with dull pulsation
Through nebulae that blind each constellation—
It slew the sudden Dawn whose breaking stuns
Void darkness into Motion; through Night's veins
Light's life but sluggish runs—
Inevitably crawls to slow cessation.

A swifter Day than stealthy Time attains
Broke blazing down in torrents more than light—
Besprent the starry Plains,—
Thus brake the Dawn that fired my living vision—
A flame that mocked the Suns with proud derision;
Celestial rains ne'er freshened Heaven's sight
For seraph's eyes, as leaped those Plains to Day
From dull and day-like white—
Then was Night cleft from Day with keen decision;
Before that Dawn the face of Light went gray,
'Twas absolute, all days departed thence—
Their false fires flamed away;
I left that Place, and lonely, sought a Higher,
(The Dayspring thundered upward, 'Mind, as-
pire!')

I poised above a vaster Eminence
Than sheer Space rears against the cinder-wrack
Of ruined clusters dense
With blackened stars and globes of titan fire,
With galaxies and unborn worlds yet black,
I paused, until the Farther Crags unseen
Should hurl the Day-Tide back;—
Alone I waited, watched, and never trembled—
The spirit of a thought my dream resembled,—
What hoped my soul to see,—the sudden sheen
Of life on tombèd systems, or the sum

Of all gray Time hath been,—
The marching of a Universe for Death assembled?

Perchance deep Everlastingness I'd plumb—
Reach under perished shoals of Dawns, and sound
Infinities to come;
No dream it seemèd, else had terror taken
Wing, and left my soul by hope unshaken;
What epoch, ere one boundless wave swept round
All vaulted heavens that gemmed the blazing Plain
Like jewels on frosty ground—
What lapse awaited I, by years forsaken,
Is compassed not by any vision's brain;
The slowly numbered aeons since Time began
Delay its name in vain:—
From Crag unseen I saw the Day-Tide brighten,
Flung high in riot billows, poised to frighten
Down deep Night the puny mind of man—
Irrevocably drown his soul in sleep
As only light-floods can,—
Down Slumber's depths no Dawn shall ever lighten.

An opal is an image of the Deep,
A sudden sea of lustrous green and blue
Where skyward billows leap—
Where wizard waters welter flame encrested
O'er crags and pools by demon-dreams infested,—
Where ever blooms the smouldering foam anew
In multitudes of wandering moons aflame
Through clouds of crimson dew,—
An opal is an Ocean fire-invested.

'Twas as a Sea of seas the Day-Tide came,
Each drop an opalascant Ocean, vast,
Devouring Number's name;

Should He who knows all Oceans rise, and shatter
Their mountained waters down to drops and scatter
Flame-rains of opal down the vacant Past—
Then, will each drop a Sea inseparate—
The Day-Tide would outlast
In fire that Universe of Light-born matter.

Should all young years who ever rose, belate
Their dawns to one supremest hour, should all
The tides one moon await
To flow and roll in unisons eternal—
A harmony of orbèd flame supernal
O'er time and shaken Time's lone fall,—
Their mingled fires might not outflame the Tide,
Or their swift greens recall
On changing azure any field so vernal
As one Tide-Blossom, shimmered, opened wide
And calm in amethystine scintillance—
Infinity's bright Bride;
My vision sprang to birth, the Tide swept nearer,
Its cloud-hewn beauty blazed in symbols clearer;
I saw Day's luminescent Armies glance
Through sinuous evolutions, folding spheres
And fires in mazy dance—
'Twas more than movement,—Motion's Mind aus-
terer.

O lonely Tomb that lonelier Thought uprears
Against colossal Night, what tongue may tell
Thy mystery to Dream's e'er wakeful ears,
For in thy vaults, unborn those Lights must wan-
der
Forever lost, unquenchably they squander
Time's mighty meanings o'er thy blackened hell
Where Chaos broods his undisputed sway—

All desolate the swell
Of thoughts a Universal Soul might ponder;
Return, immortal-visaged Day,—
Thy Tomb a Temple was, an undreamed Fane,
Outlasting quick decay
Of ageless marble myth and god-beclouded,
Whose every atom spins a richly crowded
World of memories; flow back again,
Eternal Day-Tide, ebb within my reach
On yonder deathless Plain—
Where first I knelt, all sense and sleep-enshrouded,
Build up once more those Temple-Steps, Oh teach
My eager dream what feet have ever trod
Infinity's calm Beach—
What Beings ever watch the Day-Tide breaking,—
What Pilgrims leave the Temple-steps, forsaking
Light, to tread with holier feet unshod
Those hallowed Halls that glowed as dreams beyond
And shadowed into God,—
Perfect, mystical, serene awaking.

Alas! that dreams go blind; full Day-Tide dawned;
The marching symbols ranged Immensities
As if a ghostly wand
Appointed all to Order, slowly bringing
Purpose out of Chaos, dayward flinging
Flocculi that ranged their opal seas
In level lines of clouded fire ablush
With Dawn's bright Mysteries;
Then, swift as Thought,—all leaden dreams out-
winging—

I saw the Temple Steps leap out, a rush
Of vision absolute from tumbled smoke—
Aflame their crimson flush;
And down those Steps the Universe descended—

A moment seen, a moment comprehended;
In soundless majesty all Time awoke
And showed One Face; the Steps of All alone
I saw; frail vision broke—
I fled an End of what has never ended.

Why should my sleep be troubled with a moan
For One I saw not,—life go bowed with care
For fatal hope unknown;
I dreamed the Pulse that stunned to moving being
Stars and dust of Stars was Thought's Decreeing,—
Imagining sublime of God's despair—
And Beauty everywhere
Brake as the Day Unseen yet ever seeing;
So, when the Dawn at Death's last solemn Gate
Outfires all Stars and every paler dream—
Shall I, disconsolate
Gaze back upon my soul with chill regretting—
Curse impotently clouds of blind forgetting
Enshadowing all, save one reluctant beam
Where still those Temple Steps fling back the Day,
And Reason waits her Mate,
Calm in the risen Sun that knows not setting?

UNDER THE TREES

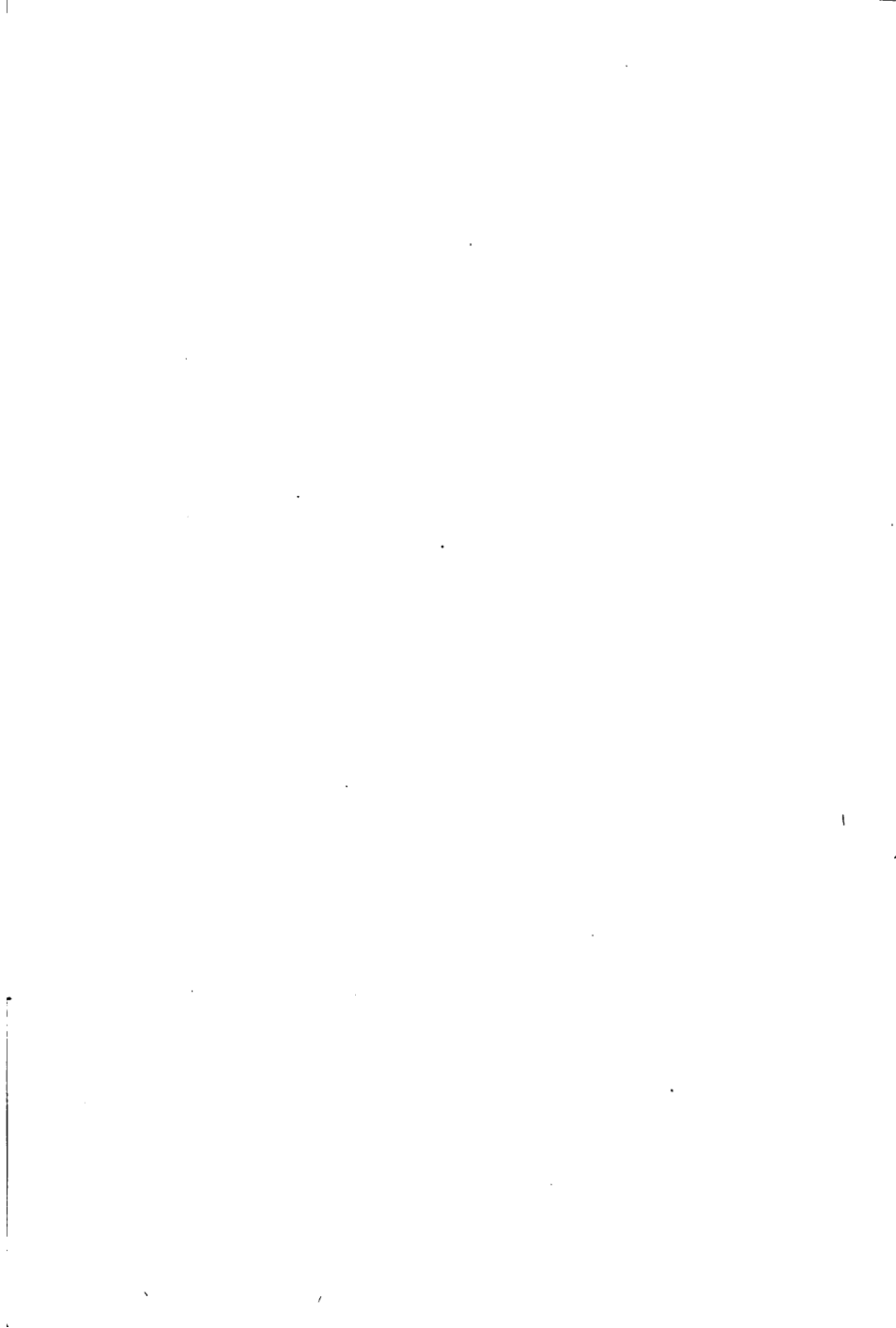
Under those trees by the well-loved lake,
Under the mournful firs
Sweeter than mirth in their whispering sigh,
Will I wait till the midnight stirs,
I will watch till the owl and his moon awake
To conquer the star-proud sky.

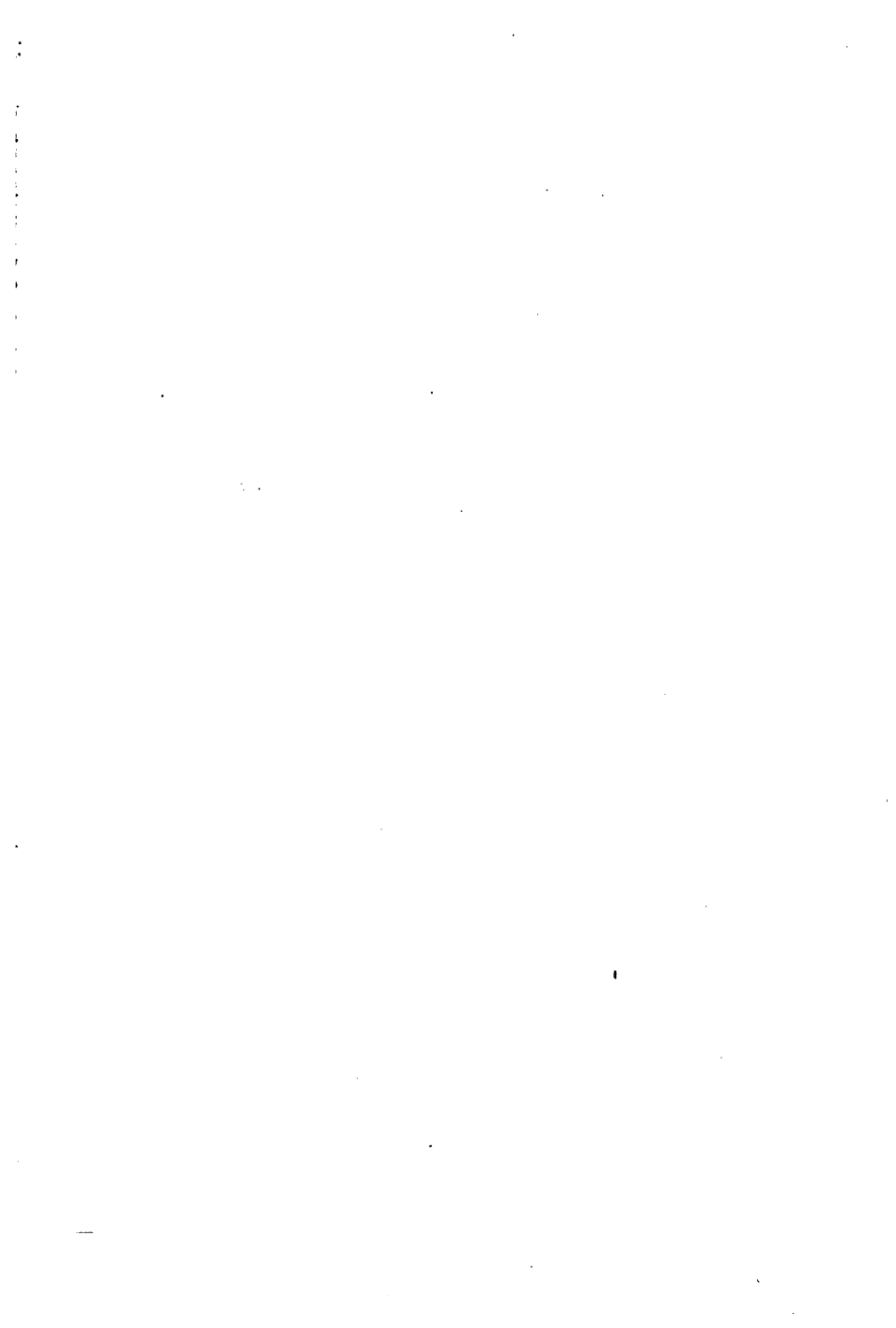
Friends of my care-free schoolboy days—
Trees I have loved so well,
Faithful alone is your passionless voice
In your music's mysterious swell—
Changeless of all to the boy's fond ways
When manhood cast his choice.

Ever alone of all have I kept
Your memory stainless, clear;
Men may sing and their women may weep,—
Human or selfish their every tear,
Petty their songs with their woes unwept,—
Eternal those tears you keep;—

Kin of the Stars and the Milky Way
Under whose glow you shine,
Trees most mystical, prophesy—
When shall your song be mine,
May I never fling back the Infinite Day
As your tops reflect the Sky?









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